# WatchTime

2018 SPECIAL

# DESIGN





Villeret





**BR-X1 SKELETON CHRONOGRAPH HYPERSTELLAR** 

The BR-X1 HYPERSTELLAR is the perfect synthesis of Bell & Ross' expertise in the world of aviation watches and master watchmaking: an instrument with an innovative design, conceived for an adventure in space and produced in a limited edition of only 250 pieces. Lightweight and resistant, the grade 5 titanium case of the BR-X1 is protected by a titanium and high-tech rubber "belt", that serves as a defensive shield. Ergonomic and innovative, the push buttons allow the chronograph functions to be used easily and efficiently. Sophisticated and reliable, the skeleton chronograph movement of the BR-X1 is truly exceptional and combines haute horlogerie finishes with extreme lightness.





# Great Design



Roger Ruegger Editor-in-Chief

— In the 1970s, Gérald Genta presented the octagonal Royal Oak to Audemars Piguet after having worked just one night on the initial design. Genta, one of the greatest and most influential watch designers of the second half of the 20th century, did not only create an "unprecedented steel watch," but also what would become Audemars Piguet's most successful watch family and a great example to highlight the importance of good design and the impact it can have on brands. And also, how challenging it can be to work on a classic for almost half a century. Over the years, Audemars Piguet has introduced the Royal Oak with a variety of complications and has used different materials that may have changed the character of the watch (even using gold, titanium, ceramic, and platinum), but still follow Genta's design closely. For our cover story, Jens Koch looks at some of these designs and how one of the most iconic wristwatches has evolved over time, and ultimately, how delicate the evolution of a design classic can be. To quote Director of Bulgari Watches Design Center Fabrizio Buonamassa Stigliani when we talked about his role at Bulgari, "You have to manage the heritage of the brand. At the same time, you have to make an improvement, each time, about this heritage."

For this third edition of WatchTime's special issue dedicated to the various design aspects in watchmaking, we

talked with various watch designers about their individual approaches, ideas and philosophies and asked them about the differences when working on an existing design versus launching a new product or even a brand. We also highlight some of the latest trends, compare avant-garde watches with architecture, and look at how usability has become much more important in the age of the smartwatch – and why so many of these digital devices still try to look like a classic watch. Which is something that definitely cannot be said for the Qlocktwo. The company behind it has come up with a concept that doesn't require hands at all: the square watches simply tell "the time in words." Last but not least, we introduce you to the winners of the Red Dot Design Award, an international product design and communication design prize.

And on that note, we hope you enjoy Watch Time's 2018 Design Special.

> Roger Ruegger Editor-in-Chief

### A SLIVER OF LIGHT

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The new series of watches from Glashütte: sitting smartly under the cuff, working with high precision—for men who are passionate about what they do. The motor within is NOMOS' sensational automatic caliber DUW 3001, made by hand in Germany, trimmed for peak performance with high tech. Metro neomatik silvercut and other models are now available with selected retailers. More: nomos-store.com, nomos-glashuette.com



### THE SHAPE OF TIME

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### **AVANT-GARDE** IN WATCHES AND ARCHITECTURE

By Maria-Bettina Eich | The buildings we inhabit and the watches we wear are everyday facts of life. We take them for granted until a creation crosses our path that captures our undivided attention.

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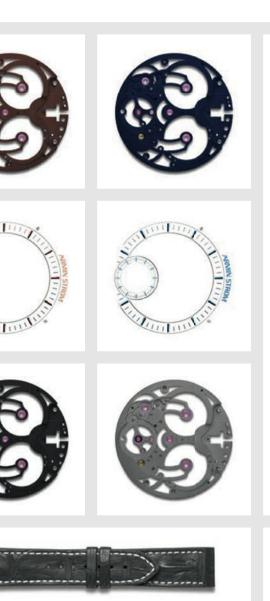
### SPELL IT OUT

By Maria-Bettina Eich | Marco Biegert and Andreas Funk began their collaboration as schoolboys in Germany. Now just about everyone loves their Qlocktwo, which spells out the time in words.

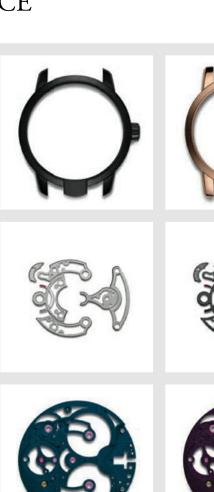


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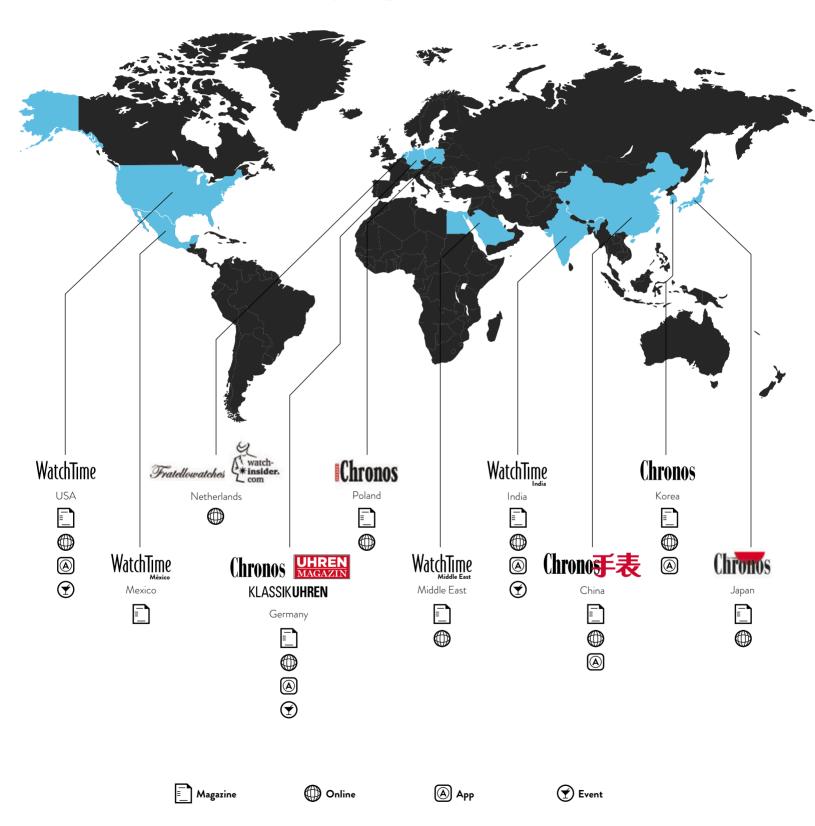
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### THE WORLD OF

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# SEE THROUGH

Look at these watches and see what's inside. Some watches celebrate transparency in ways that are both horologically and

stylistically innovative.





— This watch has neither an interior nor an exterior. The Bell & Ross BR-X2 Tourbillon Micro-Rotor (\$64,900) doesn't even have a case, but consists of two 42.5-mm sapphire plates that are screwed to each other. The head of the brand, Carlos Rosillo, explains that this design was chosen because it accentuates slim, self-winding Caliber BR-CAL. 380, which combines a micro-rotor and a flying tourbillon. The movement specialists at MHC make this caliber expressly for Bell & Ross. Limited edition of 99 pieces.

Hublot likewise has nothing to hide and conceals no realities, but simply gives them an attractive blue color. The Spirit of Big Bang Moonphase (\$22,400) has a transparent dial of colored quartz that invites viewers to admire skeletonized hand-wound Caliber HUB 1170. The 48 sapphires on the bezel and the blue hue of the alligator-skin strap accentuate the colorful radiance of this 42-mm titanium watch.

Cartier's new skeletonized Rotonde de Cartier – Heure Mystérieuse (\$88,000) plays a marvelous game of hide and seek. First, there's the fully transparent dial, on which the hands seem to float in midair. Cartier developed the principle behind the "mysterious" time display in 1912. The hands aren't directly connected to the movement but are propelled by two disks of sapphire that mesh with the movement. This secret is kept undisclosed by the new 42-mm palladium watch, but its skeletonized bridges shaped like Roman numerals allow viewers to feast their eyes on likewise skeletonized hand-wound Caliber 9983 MC.

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- > MB&F

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- > Ulysse Nardin
- > TAG Heuer
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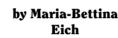
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# GREEN

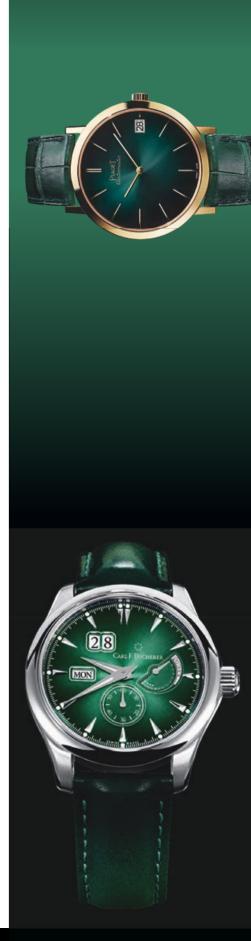
A trendy color or the revival of a classic hue? The auras of the new green watches are as changeable as their surfaces.



— Green is part of the classical color spectrum. When it's juxtaposed with yellow gold, this color radiates a traditional gentlemanly aura and the elegance of a country estate. This is well expressed, for example, by the 40-mm Altiplano (\$25,200) that Piaget equipped with automatic Caliber 1203P and unveiled in a limited edition of 260 watches to celebrate the 60th birthday of this ultra-slim model. The green color undoubtedly makes a classical impression on this sleekly elegant watch, but that's only one side of the coin. The other is that despite its unpretentious shade, the green seems a bit eccentric: it's not really understated nor does it strictly comply with the conventions of men's fashion. This green is attractive because it's just a little unexpected especially when the leather strap repeats the dial's hue.

This same visual connection between dial and strap can be seen in Carl F. Bucherer's Manero Power Reserve (\$11,000), which combines pine green and a cooler stainless-steel tone. The fumé dial's green gradation harmonizes with the curves of the 42.5-mm case and embodies a playful element that contrasts with the watch's objective styling. Carl F. Bucherer imposes strict limits on this series: only 188 pieces of this green automatic watch will be manufactured. Is the intention to keep the color exclusive?

The Lehmann watch brand from the Black Forest in Germany relies on the region's traditional red-and-green color scheme to create watches with a classical flair – invigorated by a slightly unconventional note. The green Intemporal Window Date (8,480 euros) for ladies boasts sparkling diamonds and a diameter of 38 mm, along with the collection's characteristic sunray pattern, stainless-steel case and automatic movement .



# MOTHER NATURE

Nothing inspires watch designers more strongly this year than nature, especially in its untamed variations.

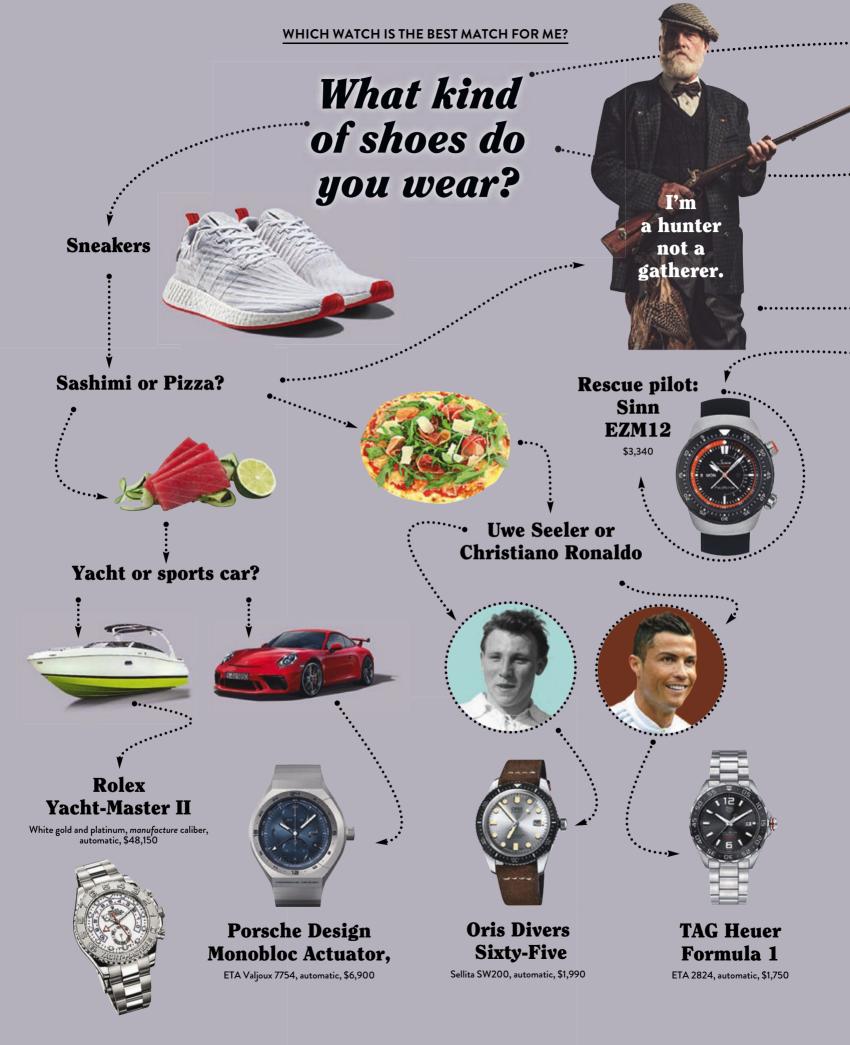
by Maria-Bettina Eich

—When nature meets watch, their encounter often takes place on the face, e.g., the dial of the Hermès "Grrrrr" (approximately 83,000 euros), where a surprisingly cropped close-up of a bear's face glowers at the viewer. The piercing look in the animal's eyes is matched by its sharp fangs, which can be seen near the rim of the dial. Hermès chose one of its silk scarves as the pattern for this 39.5-mm white-gold watch, which encases automatic Caliber H1950. British artist Alice Shirley created the bear's portrait, which is painted in enamel and requires numerous trips through the kiln before it's complete. The "Grrrrr" is limited to only six pieces.

Bulgari has transformed an entire watch into a seductive serpent. This Roman jeweler's first serpent watches debuted in the 1950s, with wristbands that wound around the wearer's forearm and dials that showed the time on the reptile's head. The new Serpenti (\$6,250) is a petite variation of the serpent watch, with a 27-mm-long head and a slim leather strap that winds twice around the wrist. Each of these quartz-powered watches is delivered with two easily interchangeable straps made of snakeskin or calfskin. The Serpenti is available in various versions: the model in red with a steel case and diamonds looks especially fiery.

If there are natural elements that escape human influence, they are the extraterrestrial. Parmigiani celebrates undomesticated cosmic forces with a watch that has a dial made from the stone of a meteorite. With its 38-mm-diameter rose-gold case, the Tonda 1950 Meteorite (\$20,500) looks at first glance like a classically elegant gents' watch in the style of the 1950s. A second look shows the characteristic stony pattern on the blue dial, which adds a mysterious dimension to this sleek, self-winding watch.









# Futurity

by Jens Koch The Royal Oak was the first all-steel luxury sports watch on the market. Avant-garde then, a classic today, Audemars Piguet gives the watch a futuristic feel with a number of modern innovations.



ROYAL OAK, 1972 The first model measured 39 mm across and was nicknamed "Jumbo."

— In the 1970s, Gérald Genta designed the Royal Oak for for Audemars Piguet. Later the famous watch designer would design the Patek Philippe Nautilus, the IWC Ingenieur and the Bulgari Bulgari – models that made Genta a legend. The iconic Royal Oak is known for its octagonal bezel, round case and eight prominent hexagonal screws, its unique "Tapisserie" dial pattern, and an integrated steel bracelet.

In addition, the watch had a diameter of 39 mm, which, in those days, was extremely large and won it the nickname "Jumbo." The watch was also very expensive even though it was made of steel (\$3,600) – more than one usually spent on a gold watch. The Royal Oak traces its name to Charles II of England, who climbed an oak tree, later called the "Royal Oak," to elude his pursuers. The Royal Navy then gave several of its war ships this same name. Notably, the HMS Royal Oaks had eight-sided openings for their cannons.

The watch had a polarizing effect on all who saw it. On the one hand, it had a very unconventional design, and on the other, it was extremely modest and simple – with no seconds hand, and produced in steel. With its anthracite-gray dial executed with a Tapisserie pattern, it exuded a sense of fine understatement. Its high price was the result of a number of technical details: screw heads whose slots were arranged in a perfect circle around the bezel, the approximately 250 different beveled surfaces on the case, and the integrated steel bracelet. It housed the world's thinnest chronograph movement with a 21k-gold rotor and date display. And in line with the demands of a sports watch, the Royal Oak was water resistant to a depth of 100 meters, ensured by the eight visible screws that sealed the case and bezel.



### AUDEMARS PIGUET ROYAL OAK



ROYAL OAK OFFSHORE SELFWINDING TOURBILLON CHRONOGRAPH, 2015

Forged carbon produces an unusual texture. nicknamed "Jumbo."





ROYAL OAK OFFSHORE DIVER, 2017 Pop colors are modern and sporty.

Over the years, the company has built the Royal Oak with a variety of complications and also used different materials that have changed the character of the watch. Audemars Piguet has even used gold and platinum. Although this contradicted the original philosophy of understatement, it reflected the desires of its customers. Because of the large number of case components, the Royal Oak was an excellent candidate for a two-color watch. There are now a number of different models made of steel and yellow gold, and steel and rose gold.



*In the meantime*, several models, such as the Royal Oak Perpetual Calendar, are made completely of black ceramic. The satin-finish surfaces correspond to the other watches because of the great effort required to craft components made of extremely hard ceramic. This modern material gives the Royal Oak a completely different appearance. Even simpler designs, such as leather straps in colors that match the dials or contrasting subdials on the chronographs, provide an exciting variation of styles.

Audemars Piguet presented a ladies' model in 2017 with a captivating aura. The Royal Oak Frosted Gold treats the surface of the case and bracelet with an ancient goldsmithing technique, giving an impression of frost covering the surface of the watch.

Audemars Piguet also offers an extra-thin model, which – with its blue-gray dial, 39-mm diameter, and thin automatic movement 2121-mirrors the original model in many ways. The 41-mm variation, with its more modern in-house movement 3120, as well as most other versions, have a new, updated look. Markers and hands are no longer rounded as before, but they reach a similar shape with multiple polished and beveled edges. The original blue dial is a typical feature of most Royal Oak models, but black and silver dials are also often used.

In addition, the skeletonized movement is a feature of the Royal Oak collection. The watch movements themselves have become a design element. The color and shape of the skeletonized bridges permit the continuous production of new variations.

### ROYAL OAK OFFSHORE CHRONO-GRAPH, 2017

A new look with a brown dial and rose-gold elements

### ROYAL OAK TOURBILLON EXTRA-THIN, 2017

Openworked dials, high-tech with superior craftsmanship



*In 1993*, with the Royal Oak Offshore, Audemars Piguet furthered the concept of the luxury sports watch, making it even sportier and more complex, with more technological features. With its 42-mm case, the watch was known as "The Beast." In the meantime, this case size has become the established standard for chronographs, and Audemars Piguet itself has added additional, even larger models to its line-up.

The Offshore received further support from celebrities like Arnold Schwarzenegger. In collaboration with this actor, Audemars Piguet introduced even larger versions, up to the Royal Oak Offshore T3 Chronograph, which debuted on the occasion of the 2003 movie, Terminator 3. At 52.5 mm, it is still the largest Royal Oak to date.

The Royal Oak also boasts a number of complications and variations. Their appearance is characterized by a range of different materials. Forged carbon is just one example. The surface has an unusual, cloudy appearance. Models made of this material included a dive watch, with a chronograph and/or tourbillon, and also a ladies' model decorated with diamonds.

Most recently, Audemars Piguet has set new and unusual accents in this luxury sports watch collection. Dials and rubber straps pop in bright colors like orange, yellow, and lime green. This is, in a way, the brand repeating the original breaking of taboos with the Royal Oak. At that time, it was unthinkable to have a luxury watch with a steel case. Today we are seeing the same expression with the brand's unconventional, super bright colors. They are available not only on the less

# DESIGN ISSUE 2018 WATCHTIME

### ROYAL OAK CONCEPT SUPER-SONNERIE, 2016

The Concept is the most technical of the three Royal Oak collections.

### ROYAL OAK CHRONOGRAPH, 2012

The complicated metal bracelet has 138 polished edges.

### ROYAL OAK CHRONOGRAPH, 2017

New color combinations add freshness to the collection.



expensive dive watch models, but even on the pricier Royal Oak Offshore Tourbillon Chronograph Automatic.

The Royal Oak Concept was first introduced in 2002 and took an extraordinary place in the Royal Oak collection. A unique case design with geometric lines, innovative materials and technologies contained in the movement are typical for this model. The technical orientation of this line is reflected in modern case materials like forged carbon, ceramic and black-coated titanium. Audemars Piguet consistently dispenses with the dial and uses only a track on the inner flange or bridges as indicators. The movements are skeletonized in part, giving them an unusual, high-tech look. Three-dimensional shapes and special case finishes are used, along with the occasional use of unusual materials, like ceramic, for the movement. The newest version is the Supersonnerie, which meets the innovative demands of the Concept line, with its newly redesigned minute repeater that has a much louder sound than any other repeater, thanks to an innovative gong system and case.

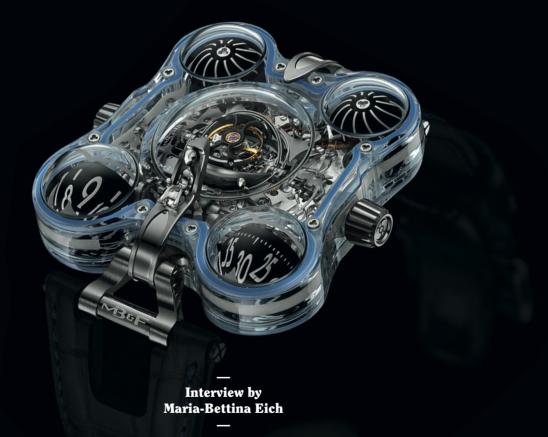
The Royal Oak line is divided into three branches. The Royal Oak collection is the most classic of the three, the Royal Oak Offshore emphasizes sportiness, and the Royal Oak Concept highlights technical innovations. In every area, Audemars Piguet continually undertakes and applies modernization methods and keeps the iconic octagonal watch forever young through its use of new materials, surface treatments and exciting colors.

### ROYAL OAK CHRONOGRAPH, 2012

The hexagonal shape of the bezel screws is repeated at the crown and pushers.



# THE WATCH IS MY CANVAS.



Year after year, MB&F surprises connoisseurs with watches that look and function totally unlike all other familiar timepieces. Max Büsser, the founder and creative mastermind of this Geneva-based brand, talks about his concept, which sees a watch as a work of art.

Previous double page: Arachnophobia, the spider clock, developed in collaboration with L'Epée

The organically shaped HM6 looks like a luminous spaceship manned by a crew of aliens.

### — How would you explain your brand's concept to someone who has never heard of MB&F?

MB&F is a decision about life. It's not a business idea. Why we exist is probably more important than what we do. To explain MB&F, I have to tell you my life story. I was a very creative child. I wanted to be an automobile designer. Later I was an extremely boring young adult. Watchmaking saved my life.

### How?

After I had earned a degree in microtechnology, I expected to work for a big Swiss company. But one day while skiing, I chanced to meet Henri-Jean Belmont, who was Jaeger-LeCoultre's CEO at that time. He asked me what I wanted to do with my life. I said I would like to work for a big corporation. He said, "If that doesn't pan out, I could offer you a job." One week later, he asked someone on his staff to phone me and invite me to a meeting. I traveled to Vallée de Joux and underwent the most amazing job interview of my entire life. It lasted three hours. Belmont didn't ask me a single question the entire time. He simply tried to convince me to join his team. Why? Because the watch industry was dead 26 years ago. Nobody was buying mechanical watches. It was all about quartz and nothing else. No one wanted to live or work in Vallée de Joux. That's why he tried so hard to convince me. He led me through the empty factory buildings and said that he wanted to create a job expressly for me. I would be product manager, a position that hadn't existed in the past.

### What thoughts went through your mind?

I was uncertain. Belmont looked me in the eyes and said, "You have to decide something in your life. Do you want to be one of 200,000 other employees in a big corporation? Or do you want to be one of us, one of the four or five individuals who will save Jaeger?" The next morning I phoned him and said, "Okay." That might well have been the first time in my life that I made a decision with my gut rather than with my head. I had become a very rational Swiss. But I'm really only half Swiss. My mother is from India. I suppose my Indian genes kicked in when I made that decision.

### So you began working in a typically Swiss industry that seemed to offer little perspective for the future?

What we did was crazy and unreasonable. It had no practical use. But it was beautiful! And it involved incredibly beautiful handcraftsmanship. It also involved saving people's jobs and keeping knowledge alive that would otherwise have vanished forever. I loved the work.

Years later, I realized that Belmont had given a meaning to my life. Most people work because they need to earn money. Very few people see a deeper meaning in their jobs. I worked unceasingly. I was happy. But one day I got a phone call from a headhunter who seeks candidates

exclusively for positions in top management. I was curious. I went to Geneva and by the end of our first discussion, they told me, "You're definitely 10 years too young." I was 31 at the time. "But we'll consider you for the job of CEO at Harry Winston Timepieces." I felt totally relaxed when I walked into the job interview at Harry Winston because I was sure I didn't have the slightest chance. Much to my surprise, I got the job. But what should have been the most beautiful day in my professional life turned out to be my worst nightmare. Harry Winston Timepieces was nearly bankrupt in 1998. I told the people at Harry Winston in New York, "This whole thing here is a catastrophe. We have the wrong products, the wrong suppliers and the wrong dealers." And they said, "It's your catastrophe now. You're the boss. Fix it."

1999 was absolutely the most awful year in my entire life. I worked like a madman. And within three months time, I had a stomach ulcer. After 18 months, we were able to stabilize the company with a small team. We increased revenues at Harry Winston Timepieces from eight to 80 million dollars between 2000 and 2005. We hired new people and opened a *manufacture*. Furthermore, in 2001 we developed the Opus concept, for which we annually collaborate with a master watchmaker to create an unconventional watch. I should have been the happiest man in the world.

### You make it sound as though you weren't.

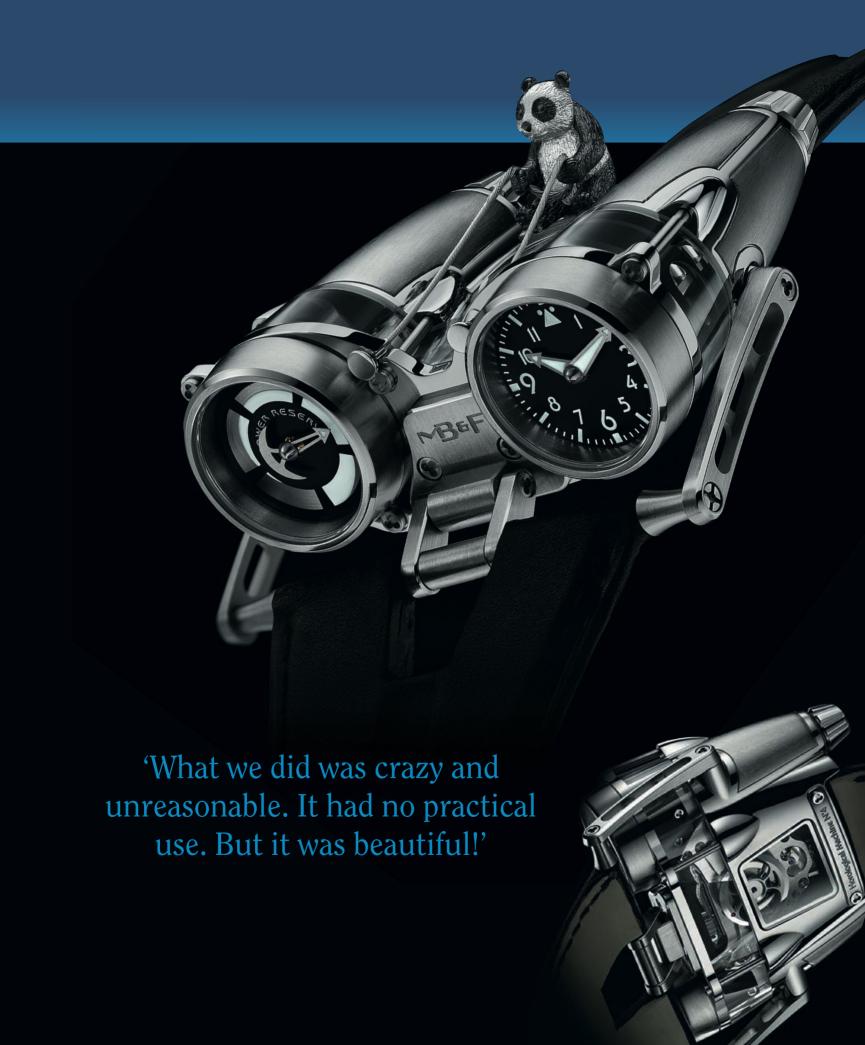
I don't come from a wealthy family. My goal has never been to have heaps of money. I simply wanted to be happy. But now I had recognition, power and a high income. The more we grew and the more success I had, the less happy I was. That was hard to accept.

Then many things happened. My father died in 2001. Unfortunately, I never got along well with my father. When he died, I wept for 12 seconds and then I went on with my life. After all, I was an adult and a CEO. A few years later, I happened to see a TV show about a son who loses his father and I started to cry like a baby. I definitely had not processed the issue. So I started therapy. What followed were 18 incredible months of self-knowledge.

At some point, my therapist asked me, "If you were run over by a bus tomorrow, what would you regret?" I thought about it and I realized that I would regret a thousand things. Above all, I became aware that I had sold the creative little boy who I used be. I had become a marketing man. I wasn't creative anymore. I only looked at the market.

Something else became clear to me, too. Although I never had a good relationship with my father, my parents were the most respectful and most honest people I've ever known. When you work in the busi-

Facing page: The HM4
Thunderbolt pilots'
watch, here in its "Only
Watch" edition with a
panda by the Chinese
artist Huan Hankang.





ness world, you deal with some terrible people. You have to accept things in your professional life that you would never accept in your private life. That felt totally dishonest to me. If I want to be proud of my life, I've got to change that. That's why I named my brand "Max Büsser & Friends." I wanted to work with people who shared my values. And I understood that although I'm quite a good manager, I don't want to be a manager. I want to be a creator. That's why I made my dream come true: to have my own small business without middle management. That's exactly what we are at MB&F today. We're four directors. Everybody else reports directly to us.

#### The company you founded isn't a conventional watch brand.

I believe that watchmaking is art. The rest is unimportant. We don't develop timepieces to show what time it is. We don't devote three years to R&D, followed by 18 months fabricating 600 components and manually finishing and embellishing them, and then four to six weeks for a master watchmaker with 20 years of experience to painstakingly assemble everything merely to give the world something that a cellphone can do better. What we do is: we create a work of art. And if it's an artwork, then why shouldn't we experiment? My idea is to make kinetic sculp-

tures, mechanical artworks that also show the time. The precision of our timepieces is, in fact, quite good. But that's not what they're all about.

The first years were arduous. We were on the verge of bankruptcy several times. Now MB&F is 12 years old and has 21 employees. The past three years were incredible. We reached my business goal in 2013. When I founded the company, I wanted to get to the point where we produce 300 timepieces per year, annually turn over 15 million Swiss francs and employ a staff of 15. When we reached that point in 2013, I said to my team, "We're going to stay right here. We're not going to grow any bigger." We develop more new pieces than ever. We reinvest every cent. My salary is half as high as it was at Harry Winston. And I've never been so happy.

#### Did you expect to reach so many people with these horological artworks?

I hadn't the slightest inkling. I'm proud to have developed a series of pieces that I imagined no one would want to buy. Especially for the HM4, the Thunderbolt: I thought nobody is ever going to buy this one. It's much too crazy. It's comfortable to wear, but it's gigantic. When I showed the watch to the dealers in Basel, they asked me if we had anything else to show them. We said, "No." And the dealers walked out. To amortize this



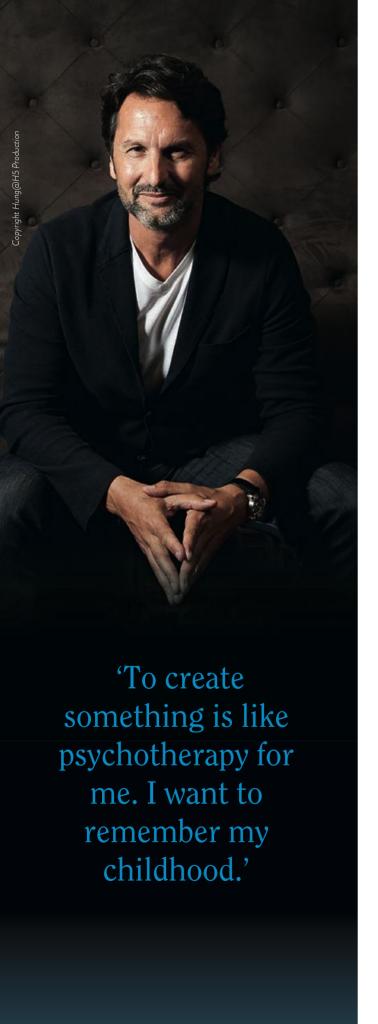
A tribute to the great watchmakers of the past, the Legacy Machine No. 1 glows in the dark like a jellyfish and also has that creature's shape: the HM7 Aquapod.

watch, we need to sell 25 of them each year. Twelve were ordered in Basel. And then a miracle happened. We launched the watch in July and we sent out press releases. Suddenly we received emails, the telephone was ringing off the hook, and people were asking us about this crazy watch. There were waiting lists. For me, this was a sign. I don't believe in God, but I do believe in people. Suddenly I knew: It's going to work out. I understood: If I design something that I'm afraid will ruin us, it usually turns out to be our bestseller. There are some people who understand what we're doing. And there are other people who don't. For every 10 who do, there are 90 who don't.

#### It takes understanding to want one of your watches, but it takes plenty of cash to actually buy one.

Indeed. I personally cannot afford my watches. What I'm wearing on my wrist right now costs as much as I earn in an entire year. As the father of two children, I would never spend that much on a wristwatch.

Does your concept also touch a nerve because people nowadays are very receptive to mechanical devices as an antithesis to the omnipresence of digital gadgets?



I believe there's a heightened receptivity for authentic things. We're so strongly bombarded by marketing. When a person sits down, tells his life story and explains how a product is actually made, then he finds people who appreciate that.

Of course, you've got to have the necessary money to buy an MB&F timepiece. For each customer who can afford one of our pieces, there the thousands of fans who don't have enough cash. And we take as much time for them as we possibly can because our community is more important than anything else. As soon as someone understands who we are and becomes a member of our community, we're very grateful. Because without this community, I wouldn't be sitting here in front of you right now. Our authenticity is important to this community. When I create something, I'm not thinking about a particular customer or about the market. We never make commissioned pieces. No matter how much money someone might offer us, I say, "No. This is my story. Not yours." If I were a painter and you liked my blue painting, would you come to me and ask me to paint the same picture in red?

#### How is the work process divided between you and the friends of Max Büsser? What do you do and what do the others do?

The friends do everything. I have only two skills. First, I can think differently than most other people. I've been able to do that ever since childhood. I suffered because of it. I was the kid who didn't belong. And I also have a second ability: I know how to bring great people together. I have an idea for a new piece. I sketch it (poorly!) and then we get together and begin making a 3-D model. We take that to the design engineers. At first, they used to say, "You're crazy." Now they say, "That's cool."

#### Do you use the word "friends" to denote everyone who works on your pieces: i.e., your company's employees as well as outside suppliers?

Everyone who contributes their work to help transform my dream into reality belongs to the family. I would be nothing without each individual link in the chain. I would like to preserve what we all learned from our parents: Treat people the way you would want them to treat you. If I were a supplier, I would be pleased if what I had done were communicated. But hardly anyone does that. We do: We name the names. My moral compass keeps me oriented in business life.

You could also develop mechanical artworks that don't show the time of day. Why do you remain loyal to the concept of time measurement? I think there are two answers to that question. First, I've become intimately merged with watchmaking: I love it. It made me what I am. Second, the watch is my canvas. I can't sing, I can't write and I can't paint. I have none of the talents that one ordinarily describes as artistic abilities. But when somebody gives me a watch's movement, it all happens totally naturally: That's who I am, that's what defines me.

#### One frequently hears talk about your enthusiasm for science fiction. What's that all about?

I was a very lonely child. I was always alone in my room and I needed a survival mechanism to keep me from going crazy because I had no friends and my father paid no attention to me. One of the things that saved me was that I had a very vivid conception of an imaginary life. I was a superhero and I saved the world at least once each day. I still want to do that today. Star Wars, Star Trek, Thunderbirds: I never said, "I want to

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make a clock that looks like a spaceship. I want to remember my childhood." So I sketch something that comes to mind, I look at it, and I analyze myself. Where does that come from? I was a geek. I wanted to design automobiles. Now we have three timepieces that have to do with cars. I built model airplanes. Later I developed the Thunderbolt. To create something is like psychotherapy for me. Many people think I'm a science-fiction fanatic. That's not so, but the world of science fiction shaped me. The motto of MB&F is "a creative adult is a child who survived." I try to understand how children who are 100-percent creative become such boring adults.

#### How does the concept of the Horological Machines differ from the concept of the Legacy Machines?

When I founded MB&F, we made only the Horological Machines, i.e., the kinetic sculptures. Then I suddenly had a whim and I designed the LM1, the first Legacy Machine. Eric Giroud, the designer I worked with, said, "I don't know what that's supposed to be." And then he left. My technical director said, "I didn't come to MB&F to make a round timepiece." I said to my team, "That's all the same to me. We wouldn't be sitting here today if the great master watchmakers of the 18th and 19th centuries hadn't developed all of those extraordinary timepieces. They were the real inventors. We only make rehashes – and most of them are less beautiful than the originals." The new concept was meant as a tribute to the great watchmakers of the past.

## What is the principle behind the collaborations between MB&F and other companies, for example, the table clocks that you developed with L'Epée?

I was a juror for graduation projects at ECAL, the university of art and design in Lausanne. I saw some of the young people there and I thought, "Wow, they're incredibly talented!" One of them asked me if he could do an internship with us. I've learned one thing in life: When you meet somebody who has talent, don't send him away. That would be a shame. Do something with him. So I thought, "Let's start something new!"

Now each year we take one of the best students from ECAL's graduating class, someone who has a bit of sense for mechanical things, and we offer him a six-month internship. All co-creations are developed by these young designers. And we always explicitly mention their names. That's helpful for their careers. This is one of my ways of giving back.

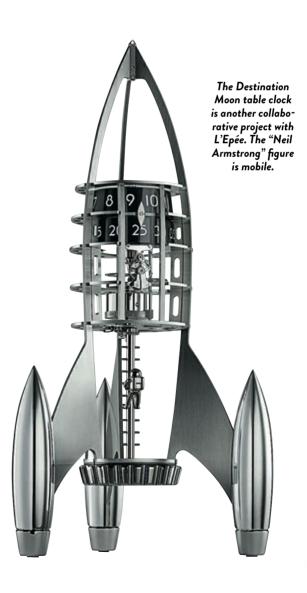
#### What was the idea behind the opening of your MAD Galleries?

We opened the first MAD Gallery here in Geneva in 2011. Many people didn't understand our work at that time and I thought to myself, "Why don't we gather other mechanical artists around us? When people see what these artists have created, perhaps they'll understand what we do."

When a person buys a piece by one of these artists, the buyer doesn't only acquire something for himself: he also helps the artist to continue working. He becomes part of the creative process. At first, we wanted to use the MAD Gallery to explain what we do. In the meantime, there are three galleries: one each in Geneva, Taipei and Dubai. They, too, embody opportunities for me to give back. Hardly any of the artists whose work we display can make a living from his art. I often describe the MAD Gallery as an orphanage. The whole thing also has to do with the fact that I'm getting older and I'm successful. Many people helped me when I was young. Now it's my turn.



The MAD Gallery in Geneva.





## WatchTime







## Winners 2017



**CLASSIC STAR** 

Rolex Oyster Perpetual Air-King



TECHNICAL STAR

Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Concept Supersonnerie



**DESIGN STAR** 

Hermès Slim d'Hermès Email Grand Feu



STAR FOR A LIFETIME

Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Extra-thin



**NEW STAR** 

Bulgari Octo Finissimo Minute Repeater

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The Watchstars Awards are recognized worldwide. They are given out annually by an international jury, which consists of experts, collectors, bloggers and journalists. Watchstars honors "the best watches of the world" in five different categories. Only the jury is allowed to nominate watches. Manufacturers are not permitted to submit models. All watches, regardless of size, brand, or country of origin, will be eligible to be put to the vote. The Watchstars Awards are truly independent and are represented worldwide.



## SMART DESIGN

Smartwatches are gaining ground.

And while some are styled like analog
watches, others venture into totally
different worlds of design.

by Jens Koch — Smartwatches haven't made the mechanical watch obsolete, but they're on their way toward establishing themselves. With the Apple Watch, Apple became the world's largest watch manufacturer of smartwatches in 2016. Pundits estimate that this electronic wearable has earned more revenue for Apple than Rolex earns with all of its business activities. As recently as five years ago, no one could have imagined such a thing.

Even if you feel no need for text messages or navigational displays on your forearm, you will see increasing numbers of people wearing smartwatches on their wrists. How do manufacturers use the new potential and master the challenges of these trendy wearable minicomputers? In many different ways.

Basically, there are several types of smartwatches, including so-called "hybrid" ones, i.e., smartwatches without monitors and with hands. Alpina and Frédérique Con-

stant smartwatches look like mechanical timepieces and are styled to match these brands' elegant or sporty collections. Alpina's Seastrong Horological Smartwatch, for example, not only looks like a divers'watch, it's also watertight to 100 meters and has a unidirectional rotatable bezel with a dive-time scale, so it's well equipped for underwater missions. Nevertheless, it signals its wearer when a text message or a phone call arrives on his smartphone. The watch vibrates and its hands point toward the corresponding symbol. This watch can also tally strides, detect its wearer's sleep cycles, and relay these data to his cellphone. Visually, however, this smartwatch looks no different from the brand's analog models.

*Alpina, Frédérique Constant, Mondaine* and other watch brands design their smartwatches to look like ordinary wristwatches. The downside is this compels them to make do with



a significantly narrower functional spectrum than other smartwatches offer. Apple and Sony, on the other hand, go to the other extreme. They offer miniature smartphones for the wrist with quadratic displays. As in these brands' cellphones, a certain stylish inventiveness is evident, but especially Sony's Smartwatch 3 looks like a high-tech device. Apple tries to breathe some life into its smartwatch by offering a variety of bracelets, straps and dials. These include leather and colorful textile straps, Milanese bracelets, and a luxurious version made of white ceramic, while the dials lure potential buyers with flowers, butterflies or Mickey Mouse. Aficionados of luxury can also opt for a combination of Apple and the traditional Parisian maison, Hermès. The Apple Watch relies on a practical system for changing wristbands, so its owner can quickly swap among various wristbands, which Hermès designed and manufactures. These cost several times more than a Sony smartwatch.

Although the extremely expensive gold versions of the Apple Watch haven't really gained much of a foothold, the watch's concept clearly emphasizes luxury and offers interchangeable wristbands and dials to appeal to the lifestyles of different target groups. This is how Apple is attempting to resolve the contradiction between a mass-produced item manufactured in the millions of units and the individualism that a wristwatch essentially offers and with which its wearer can express his or her uniquely personal style.

Most clocks and watches are round, so manufacturers like Motorola also make round smartwatches, although a circular digital display isn't optimal for all applications. However, wearers can choose various round dials. As far as the case and the wristband are concerned, the styling options are limited for watches priced around \$200, although electronics manufacturers are essentially free to design whatever they





The Alpina Seastrong Horological Smartwatch is a well-camouflaged smartwatch.

want - after all, they aren't obliged to uphold any canons of watch tradition.

Samsung, too, has understood that good design is a key to success. This Korean brand commissioned the Swiss watch designer Yvan Arpa to create the somewhat more expensive Gear S3 with a round monitor. Arpa's past credits include work for Hublot. With his own brand "Artya," he primarily brings unconventional small series watches to the market. He has created a rather timeless design for Samsung.

The established manufacturers of luxury watches rely primarily on their existing design traditions. TAG Heuer, Montblanc and to a lesser degree Louis Vuitton all make smartwatches that are oriented according to these brands' existing collections, yet integrate touchscreens. TAG Heuer was the first brand to take the daring step. Its Connected established the smartwatch with a display as an appropriate genre for prestigious watch brands. As in the first version, the case and wristband of the second generation are

Sony's SmartWatch 3 is like a smartphone for the wrist.



essentially patterned after their counterparts on the sporty Carrera. The options for individualization are diverse. Variously colored bezels, cases, strap lugs and wristbands can be configured via the Internet. The personalization even goes as far as gold versions with diamonds. Sporty, elegant or technical-looking variations are likewise possible.

Hardly anyone in the watch industry is fearful that the Quartz Crisis of the 1970s might repeat itself and that the rise of a new wristwatch technology could again lead to the demise of watch brands. But there are plenty of consumers who appreciate the functionality of a smartwatch, so the watch industry is eager to offer them a prestigious alternative, mostly in the upper price echelons. Nevertheless, the starting price of Montblanc's Summit is around \$900. Montblanc's product even dares to use a retro design from the 1858 collection with push-pieces that look like onion-shaped crowns and matching, virtual, vintage dials. If desired, one can treat oneself to individualized luxury and commission Montblanc's design department to create a dial based on one's own ideas. TAG Heuer's smartwatch starts around \$1,500 while Louis Vuitton's Tambour Horizon starts around \$2,500. The brand's Tambour collection inspired its playfully geometric shape with concave sides and various dial designs. As on TAG Heuer's model, a special system lets the wearer switch wristbands without reaching for a tool. Not surprisingly, some of the 60 available wristband variations feature the world-famous "monogram" logo.

As far as their functions go, there isn't much difference between TAG Heuer, Montblanc and Louis Vuitton. Each of these brands relies on Google's Android Wear operating system. TAG Heuer's smartwatch is equipped with a GPS receiver. Montblanc's model has a built-in heart rate monitor.

Garmin's Fenix 5X is a sports watch with smart functions.





**One detail detracts** from the design of all watches with touchscreens: Their monitors spend most of the time unlit, so they look uniformly black and dead. The wearer must first reanimate the screen by turning his or her wrist. If the monitor were kept continuously lit, the rechargeable battery would be exhausted in less than 24 hours. Manufacturers of sports watches offer a viable alternative: Their displays aren't based on luminous LED technology, but on the non-luminescent "memory in pixel" technique, so their batteries can stay alive for several days at a stretch with the displays continuously switched on. Newer devices such as Garmin's Fenix 5X and Suunto's Spartan aren't only equipped with full-color monitors, but also offer classical smartwatch functions, e.g., display of text messages and app notifications. Furthermore, they're available with steel or titanium cases and with sapphire crystals, so they also don't look inappropriate when playing sports. They often rely on a slightly military-looking

Sinn has an interesting alternative for people who don't want to sacrifice their wrists completely to a smartwatch. Sinn's "dual band" system consists of a total of five band elements. Sets of two such elements can be simultaneously connected to a Sinn mechanical watch and the Apple Watch. These short interconnectable straps let the user wear a mechanical watch on the top of the wrist and a smartwatch on the underside of the wrist. The wristband's fifth element

design, so they can be interpreted as modern tool watches.

replaces either the smartwatch or the mechanical watch so each timepiece can be worn singly.

Potential buyers shouldn't base their purchasing decision exclusively on visual criteria because if you opt for the Apple Watch, you're better off if you have an iPhone. This smartwatch doesn't communicate with other cellphones, e.g., Android phones. The situation isn't quite so bad with the other brands. Smartwatches from Sony, Motorola, TAG Heuer, Montblanc and Louis Vuitton are all based on the Android Wear operating system and accordingly work best in tandem with Android cellphones, with which they provide their full scope of functions. The new Android Wear 2.0 communicates somewhat better with an iPhone and displays text messages and incoming phone calls, but it doesn't enable its user to navigate or make phone calls.

The smartwatch is a relatively recent invention, but it's already available in diverse designs and gradations. The palette ranges from smartwatches that are indistinguishable from mechanical watches, to smartwatches with retro cases and analog dials and round displays, to high-tech devices that look like miniature cellphones for the forearm. The most exciting aspects are the varied options for individualization offered by TAG Heuer's Connected Modular 45. Although the new technical potentials offer enormous creative freedom for completely new designs, relatively little use has been made of this liberty thus far.





# SHAPE SHAPE TIME

#### The designers:

#### Alexandre Peraldi,

Design Product Director of Baume & Mercier

#### Christian Knoop,

Creative Director IWC Schaffhausen

#### Christoph Behling,

product designer and founder of Christoph Behling Design

#### Eric Giroud,

product designer and owner of Through the Looking Glass

#### Fabian Schwaerzler,

product designer

#### Fabrizio Buonamassa Stigliani,

Director of Bulgari Watches Design Center

#### Matthieu Allègre,

watch designer

#### Sébastien Chaulmontet,

Head of Innovation and Marketing at Sellita

#### Xavier Perrenoud,

Professor of Design at ECAL, founder XJC

#### Questions by Roger Ruegger

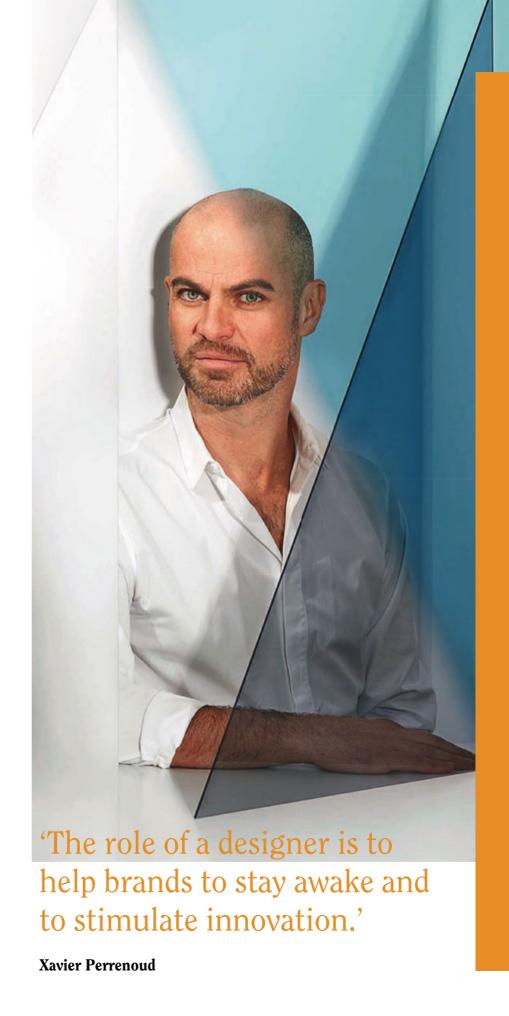
— The often tedious process of designing a new watch involves a lot more than the aesthetic and functional dimensions. The positioning of a product or brand, for example, its history or intended purpose, research, marketing briefings, economic specifications or restrictions, a desire to display a watch's specific mechanical feature, feedback from dreaded focus groups and, of course, sometimes also from management, will most likely have an impact on how the finished product will look. In other words, the task of designing a pilots' watch for a new brand versus redesigning a classic watch range for an established watch company is likely to be as different as going from furniture design to drawing a sketch for a concept car.

For this reason, WatchTime interviewed nine different designers in Switzerland, including independent industrial designers, freelance watch designers, lead designers of large brands and even a movement designer, about the role of design in watchmaking, where they get their ideas, and what they think good design is. Here are some of their answers. (The full interviews can be found on watchtime.com)

#### What is the role of a designer in the watch industry?

Fabrizio Buonamassa Stigliani: It depends. If you have a very small brand, you have to make a lot of different things. If you have a big group, a big brand like Bulgari, you have to manage the heritage of the brand. At the same time, you have to make an improvement, each time, about this heritage. So, at Bulgari, my role is to manage this impressive archive and, at the same time, imagine the scenarios for the future. So, the designer is not just someone that has to be able to make sketches on the paper, but has to be able to imagine products that don't exist yet, and has to be able to convey the values of the brand. If you are alone, a small brand without heritage, without roots, it may be that you have to invent the brand from scratch. It could be easy at the beginning, but could be, even, very, very difficult. If you have to manage the heritage of a brand like Bulgari, that was born centuries ago, in Rome, so, you have to convey all the values of the Italian design culture, and at the same time you have to make an evolution of the designs that you can find in your archives.

Eric Giroud: This role is different depending on



the watch brands. For example, with some brands, a designer is involved in the design and the future vision of the brand. Then there's the drawing, which is a tool to communicate the ideas and designs. For some brands, the work of the designer is limited to the drawing. For my part, the work of the designer is very broad. It is placed often and more and more at the stage of design and research but I am formed by my career as an architect or a project is the result of global thinking and not a pretty drawing.

Sébastien Chaulmontet: Well, like in any other field, to make beautiful products which meet (and hopefully exceed) the customers' expectations. The thing which might be slightly different in the field of mechanical watches is the highly technical and functional aspect of a watch. Therefore, good watch designers should also have a profound understanding of the functioning of a watch movement. In addition, in modern high-complicated watches, you can barely dissociate the case, dial and movement. They are very much integrated and should therefore be designed as a whole.

Christoph Behling: Understanding and capturing the amazing art of the last 100 years of watchmaking, while creating new designs which are relevant today and last the next 100 years. The amazing quality of TAG Heuer or Zenith watches means that technically they will work perfectly well in 50 years – it is my job to make sure that their design will last at least that long. The designer has to balance past and future.

Christian Knoop: Mechanical watches have a rich and fascinating history and many of them become iconic products within the world of luxury accessories. Nowadays, these watches are not just instruments to read the time. They are objects that our customers connect with on a very deep and emotional level. Luxury and beauty always went together and therefore the design and the aesthetics play a very important role. In a market where new products pop up every day, our responsibility as a designer is to create products that stand out and are relevant and recognizable because they reflect the values of a brand and speak to the customer's heart. **Xavier Perrenoud:** The role of a designer is to help brands to stay awake and to stimulate innovation. Of course, it has to be in coherence with the brand's roots.

#### How did you get into watch design?

Alexandre Peraldi: A recipe from the Zen philosophy has always followed me. It says something like this: "If you want to paint bamboo, find the most beautiful bamboo first. Sit in front of it and watch it. From all angles, on all sides, to become bamboo yourself. At that moment,



objects that our customers connect with on a very deep and emotional level.'

**Christian Knoop** 

#### **DESIGN PHILOSOPHIES**

forget everything ... and paint!" I try to apply this precept for all design work. Be prepared in advance for all the possibilities, technical and aesthetic, all the constraints and all the objectives, in order to better free myself when I begin to work.

\*\*Matthieu Allègre:\* I began to work in a watch design agency in Neuchâtel. It was the best experience I have ever had, meeting inspiring people and discovering the background of watchmaking. Since this experience I have fallen in love with watchmaking; one year later I decid-

Christian Knoop: I am an industrial designer by training and started my career working on different products like furniture, consumer electronics, domestic appliances, industrial products and even aircraft interiors. Already, before I joined IWC, I admired the aesthetical consistency of the brand. So when I was asked to head their design department, I felt much honored. It's very satisfactory to design a product that is so deeply touching our customers. Watches are clearly the most emotional products I have ever worked with.

*Fabian Schwaerzler:* I started with furniture design. Over the years, I developed skills and a way of essential design thinking, which I can adapt now to all kinds of objects. Seven years ago I discovered the watch as a piece of micro architecture. The rules are the same: It is about proportions and space.

The Constant Force
Tourbillon from Arnold
& Son, developed by
Sébastien Chaulmontet





'You always have to navigate between the aesthetic and mechanical aspects of things.'

Sébastien Chaulmontet

Matthieu Allègre: I began to work in a watch design agency in Neuchâtel. It was the best experience I have ever had, meeting inspiring people and discovering the background of watchmaking. Since this experience I have fallen in love with watchmaking; one year later I decided to follow my heart (founding a design agency). Eric Giroud: I studied music and architecture. I always wanted to become a designer one day. I worked initially on the packaging and on the design of objects such as lighting, furniture, writing instruments, or telephones. Then a project of a watch was presented to me in 1997. Since then, I focused on this topic because I have a special affinity with the object 'Watch' and the world of watchmaking.

Fabrizio Buonamassa Stigliani: You need to have a passion for watches. I am an industrial designer. I made a lot of different things during my career. I started in the automotive industry, but for a certain period, I was a consultant, an external consultant, so I made a lot of different ideas for different products. You need to have a passion for watches, because otherwise it's a very small, small world, not just in terms of dimension, because we are talking about 600 components in 45 millimeters, sometimes, for the grand complication watches. You need to be passionate about details, about beautiful things. So, that's why. I love watches, I love cars, I love all beautiful objects. I think that is very important, to be passionate about beautiful things, and to pay attention to details.

#### What is good (watch) design for you?

*Fabian Schwaerzler:* I love the original Swatch, the model GB100. It is innovative and democratic, and the design is functional and honest. That is how design should be. In the design of the dial of the L1 watch there is a similar spirit of Swiss graphic functionality. Besides, there is this rare Patek Philippe Calatrava Reference 2585, which keeps on fascinating me.

**Sébastien Chaulmontet:** A good mechanical movement is one that is as technically flawless as it is aesthetically pleasing. In addition, a movement is only good when the available space is used in the best possible way. Like for a car engine, you want the most horsepower and lowest consumption possible. As a movement designer, you recognized pretty easily if a movement was designed as a whole or if there are afterthoughts / bad compromises because initial choices were wrong. Sometimes it is better to delete a half-perfect movement and start again than to try to fix it with bad compromises. The new 3-D software has made designing a movement too easy in a way. Movement designers often start drawing without too much thinking



Zenith's new Defy Lab, designed by Christoph Behling



'The designer has to balance past and future.'

**Christoph Behling** 

and take things as they come. A good movement designer knows where he wants to go and, in the best case, he even has the movement in his mind before he starts his computer. That was the way they did things in the past, as they had to draw it all by hand.

*Eric Giroud:* Good design is a consistent watch with a little tension, beautifully proportioned, original visual codes and good ergonomics. The Royal Oak from Audemars Piguet model is a fine example of good design by its singularity and its very modern design. In more contemporary works, and without mentioning my work, Urwerk's model UR-103 is revolutionary. In the more classical style, I find the work of François-Paul Journe very coherent and modern.

Christian Knoop: A successful design is never random, but it can clearly be identified as belonging to a certain brand. It has to follow the tradition of the brand and has a unique character. Our clients are looking for orientation and a high recognition value. Some of our watch families, like the Portugieser or Pilot's Watches, have been speaking the same design language for more than 70 years. Of course, this language has evolved, but it still embodies the DNA of our brand. For me, this is outstanding watch design.

*Xavier Perrenoud:* It is the same as in cooking, everything has to be well balanced, perfectly done and served at the right moment! At the moment, I follow with attention the work of Ressence.

Alexandre Peraldi: Raymond Loewy said, "The most beautiful line is the sales curve!" It should not be forgotten that the designer works for a brand. A magnificent creation that does not sell remains a piece of art. A good design is first and foremost one that speaks the best of the brand it is supposed to represent. Then, for me, a good design will be the one that first seduces the person who wants to offer it and will then be forgotten on the wrist ... a well designed watch must be super comfortable! In addition, each watch owner has his own idea of good design, the design that matches him. This is what I find difficult in the design of a watch. Seduce a customer without knowing exactly what he wants.

#### Where do you get your ideas?

*Christoph Behling:* My designs range from the instrumental tool watch to the scientific con-

cept, from timeless classic to the emotional. Good design listens very quietly and tenderly to what this project "wants to be" – then to be bold and focused to translate that feeling together with the engineers into a great piece. Sometimes that means to go into the archive to look at some old Heuer pieces quietly and at the same time go out into a London gallery to understand how to capture the 21st century.

Sébastien Chaulmontet: Mainly from historical pieces. Not that I ever want to copy them, but they show the way. You have to know and study them in order to push the boundaries a little bit further. A second aspect are new materials and technologies, which allow us to create things that past watchmakers could just dream of or were impossible to make. As Breguet said, "Give me the perfect oil and I will make you the perfect watch." So imagine what Breguet would have thought about an oil-free escapement, for instance.

*Xavier Perrenoud:* You can find inspiration everywhere! Working with my students in Ecal for the Master for luxury and craftsmanship is really important for me. The most important for a designer is to be curious and take nothing for granted.

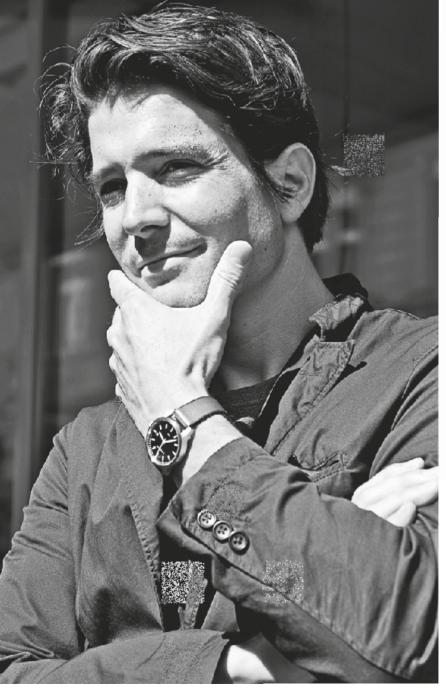
Alexandre Peraldi: Everything can be a source of inspiration for a designer. For my part, everything I see, and everything I touch gives me ideas. If these ideas are tenuous at the beginning, with time and perseverance, they take shape little by little. This can come from fashion, architecture, but also from gastronomy ... Chefs today draw their plates sometimes with a lot of aesthetics. Finally, I look at people. Their outfit, their look, their way of moving, of walking. This sometimes gives me direction for creating new models.

#### Which product or watch would you like to see get a makeover?

Alexandre Peraldi: The connected watches. They are still too much in the aesthetic standards of traditional watches. Yet they could revolutionize the design of the objects we wear on the wrist. Christian Knoop: It takes several years for the design and development team to create a new product. When we launch a new product at a fair, we are already working on something different. Design is never a linear process. In the case of the Da Vinci, for example, it took us nine years to get everything right. The secret of a suc-







#### **DESIGN PHILOSOPHIES**

cessful makeover is to have the right idea at the right time.

designers. It's impossible to say, honestly, "I would re-design an object like this." Because

*Matthieu Allègre:* A new model from Rolex should be interesting, but I don't think they will plan on doing it. Otherwise, I will be interested to work on the new Auricoste Type 20, a French brand I discovered two years ago.

*Xavier Perrenoud:* I think that the industry has to make a big makeover. From the product, communication, sales, everything must change fast. Thinking more about the new generation of customers is key.

*Fabrizio Buonamassa Stigliani:* It's difficult to say, because the industrial design history is full of beautiful objects. I have in mind Castiglioni, Zanuso, Bruno Munari – all the greatest Italian

designers. It's impossible to say, honestly, "I would re-design an object like this." Because when you touch the icons, in 99 percent, you make mistakes. You have to be able to understand this concept. So, I cannot touch the Arco lamp from Castiglione, because it's an icon.

Form follows function or function follows form? *Christian Knoop:* I like the design credo "form follows function, "like it is expressed in the instrument look of our Aquatimer divers' watches or our Pilot's Watches. Sometimes the design has to support and inspire a specific spirit, like classic motorsports or the rough nature on the Galapagos Islands; themes we use in our collection to highlight aspects of our history or activities with our brand partners. There, this pure functional approach is limited and the designers have to find different solutions to convey that message or spirit through the design of the watch.

**Sébastien Chaulmontet:** In a mechanical watch, neither of these two assertions can be the answer or the way to go, as a watch must be functional and beautiful in the same degree. Function and form are equally important and insep-

arable. A good watch is when everything perfectly fits together. This is when an average watch becomes a good watch. You have sometimes to try hundreds of variants in order to have a movement that is as technically perfect as it is visually appealing and fits the case. Too often you realize, when looking closely at a watch, that either the aesthetic aspect or the mechanical one is a sort of compromise. Some are designers' watches (and are not technically done well) and some are watchmakers' watches (and lack of a perfect design). This is what makes watchmaking so exciting. You always have to navigate between the aesthetic and mechanical aspects of things.

Christoph Behling: It is not a linear process; both influence each other. There is no general hierarchy between emotional and rational. It depends on the product. The TAG Heuer Golf watch was created after analyzing with Tiger Woods and his team exactly what a golf player needs, and the form is purely based on function. TAG Heuer's Diamond Fiction was purely born out of an emotional wish I had to see how a diamond would look if it is used as a lens and not as a "reflector" – pure emotion.

The Octo Roma from Bulgari



'The designer is not just someone that has to be able to make sketches on the paper, but has to be able to imagine products that don't exist yet, and has to be able to convey the values of the brand.'

Fabrizio Buonamassa Stigliani

#### **DESIGN PHILOSOPHIES**

Alexandre Peraldi: For the watch designer, it is advisable to approach an existing caliber by its function. But it is also necessary to find ways to create objects of very small size with many aesthetic attributes and which adapt to the very particular range of the wrist. We often compare watch design with automotive design, but we often forget the difficulty of working on an object as small as a watch. It must be useful, effective, beautiful and comfortable.

Fabrizio Buonamassa Stigliani: In Italy, we have a different perception about beauty. We grow up surrounded by beauty. You see Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Caravaggio – it's a very, very long list. It's a part of our DNA. I'm an industrial designer. I know very well industrial design history. Form follows function, for us it's not enough. This is something that works very well for the German design culture. For Dieter

Rams, that's a designer that I love, that makes beautiful things for Braun. But, for us, form follows function, it's not enough. An object has to be beautiful; it has to be unique. So, when you see our Finissimo Automatic or Finissimo Minute Repeater, you see something different. You see the beauty that comes from the passion and the playfulness that we have, to play with constraints. It's not the perfect shape, we don't care about perfect shape, because the perfect shape is just cold. We need something warm, we need something that gets attention, to catch the attention of our clients.

#### What project are you most proud of?

Alexandre Peraldi: I am sincerely proud of all the projects I have worked on. Those who have had success and also the biggest failures. They all had a good reason to exist and all were thought of with the same fervor, the same passion. Besides, when I see in the street, on a wrist, a watch that I have drawn, I am proud! Regardless of the model.

*Christian Knoop:* If I had to pick one single product, then it would be the Portugieser Yacht Club from 2010. It was one of my very first projects for IWC and an important milestone in the development of the product family at same time. In that sense, it will always be very special for me

Sébastien Chaulmontet: The Arnold & Son Constant Force Tourbillon. The watch is, in my eyes, both a technical and aesthetic achievement. We invented a constant force mechanism, which is both pleasing (it rotates around itself in 60 seconds, like a tourbillon cage but by jumping every second) to the eye and extremely efficient. The movement is perfectly symmetrical and still uses





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the available space in the best possible manner Therefore, nor the aesthetic nor the functionality of the movement had to suffer any compromise. This was not an easy feat. In addition, only selected elements are shown dial side, which gives a unique and very technical look to the movement.

Matthieu Allègre: When a project I designed comes on the market, that's real satisfaction, but I have confidentiality agreements with lots of brands so I prefer to keep it for me. But what I can tell you is that what I am currently working on, is probably the most complex and exciting project I did, I worked almost one year with a manufacturer here in Switzerland for developing our own prototypes with a 3D printing technology comes on the market. And for the moment this project has no brand, but I am sure it will make lots of noise. We plan to look for someone who could launch this project after the final prototype.

*Eric Giroud:* Without hesitation, I'm very happy to participate in the adventure MB&F, which in 11 years has become a research laboratory in the sense of a different point of view on watchmaking and mainly in what concerns the design and approach of a watch object. Overall, I'm lucky to have been able to participate in the development of design for many brands in very different price segments.

*Xavier Perrenoud:* Most of them, I tried to be involved 100-percent honestly in all projects I'm doing. In parallel, I always do a personal work and in this moment, I'm quite happy with a series of drawings I started in 2016.

Fabrizio Buonamassa Stigliani: I started my career at Bulgari in 2001, more or less, and I started to design a lot of different things. Each object is very important for a designer, because it means a specific moment of his life. Octo, for sure, is the most mature today. But often when someone asks me about "the best product," often I say "the next one." Because for me, the Octo is the past. It's something that we are continuing to work on. We continue to talk about Octo at the next Baselworld, for us, it's an impressive asset. But, I am a designer, so I'm looking for new ideas.

#### Matthieu Allègre





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## Prizewinning Design

At the Red Dot Design Award for Product Design in 2017,
Hublot was the only watch brand to earn the highest commendation – the Red Dot Best of the Best.

by Rüdiger Bucher



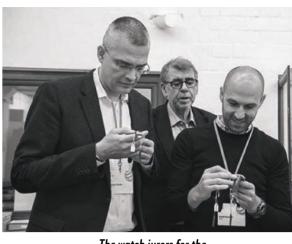
#### RED DOT BEST OF THE BEST

**HUBLOT** 

Big Bang Meca-10 Magic Gold



- Eleven watches earned the coveted international Red Dot Design Award for Product Design in 2017. Hublot was the only watch brand to receive the highest commendation: the Red Dot Best of the Best, which was awarded to Hublot's Big Bang Meca-10 Magic Gold. Manufacturers and designers from 54 countries submitted over 5,500 products to compete for the Red Dot Award for Product Design in 2017. In the product category "Watches," significantly more models made by German and Swiss manufacturers were among the winners in 2017 than had earned commendations in 2016. TAG Heuer and Maurice Lacroix each garnered two awards. Armin Strom, Chronoswiss, Nomos and Rado likewise numbered among the victors. The three-man jury consisted of Chronos's editor-in-chief Rüdiger Bucher, Chronos's author Gisbert L. Brunner, and watch designer Simon Husslein.



The watch jurors for the Red Dot in 2017: Rüdiger Bucher, Gisbert Brunner and Simon Husslein

#### **RED DOT**

**CHRONOSWISS** 

Flying Regulator

**MAURICE LACROIX** 

Masterpiece Skeleton

**MAURICE LACROIX** 

Masterpiece Chronograph Skeleton

**ARMIN STROM** 

Mirrored Force Resonance

**NOMOS** 

Metro neomatik nachtblau

**BRAUN** 

Classic Slim BN0211

SHENZEN CIGA DESIGN

The Innovative Anti-Seismic

**Mechanical Watch** 

**TAG HEUER** 

Autavia Calibre Heuer 02

**TAG HEUER** 

Monaco Calibre 11

**RADO** 

Ceramica

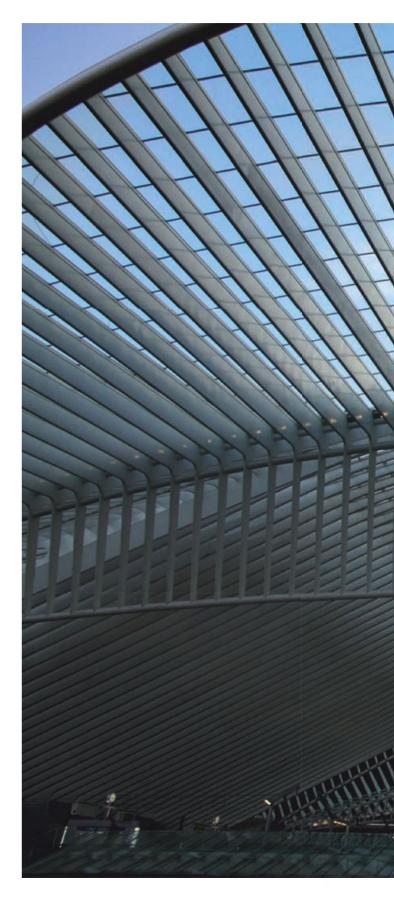


### AVANT-GARDE IN WATCHES AND ARCHITECTURE

The buildings we inhabit and the watches we wear are everyday facts of life.

We usually take them for granted and scarcely even notice them – until a creation crosses our path that captures our undivided attention.

by Maria-Bettina Eich



#### **GRIDS**

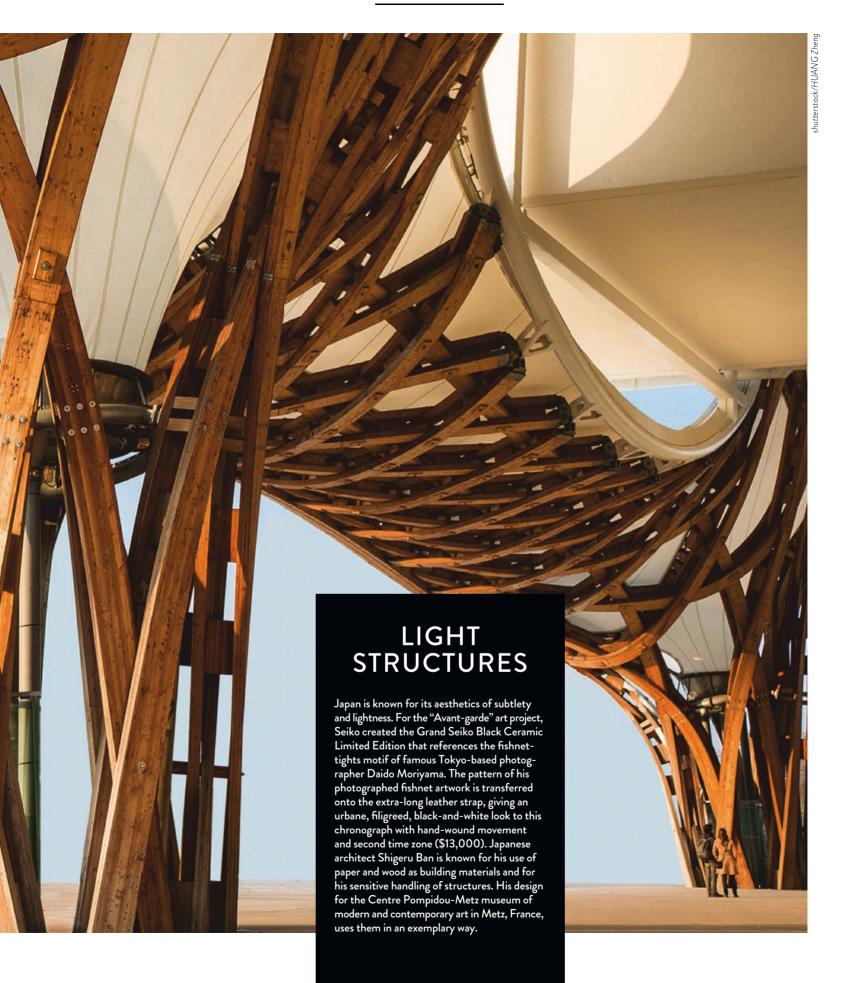






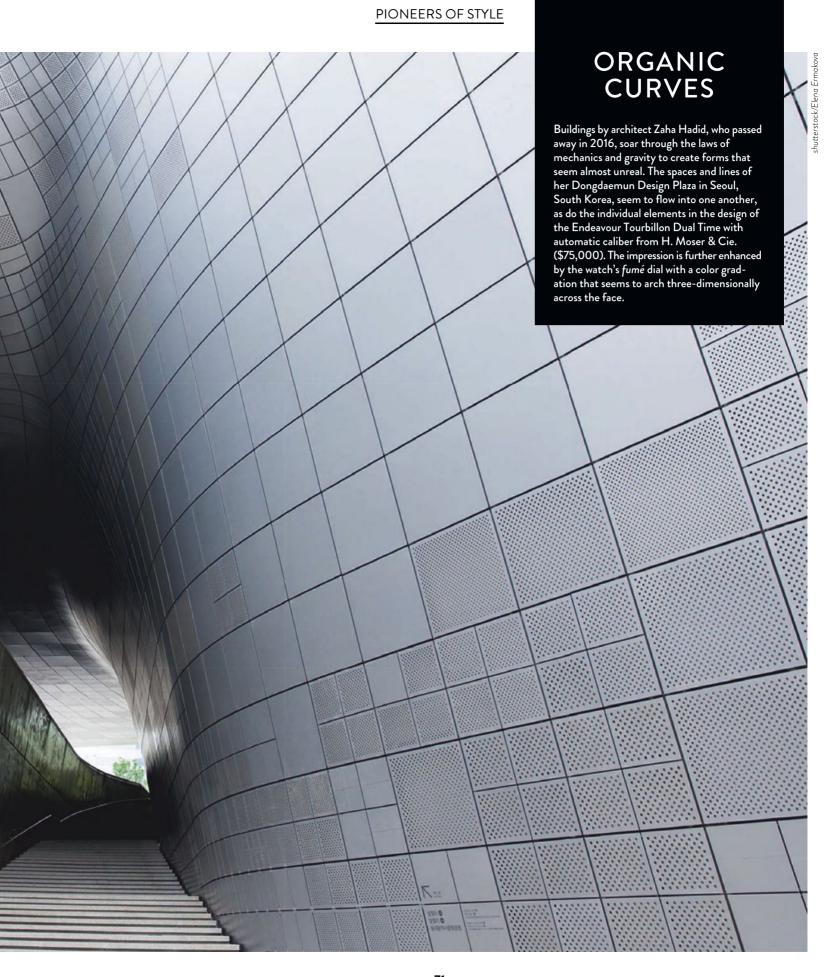
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#### PIONEERS OF STYLE





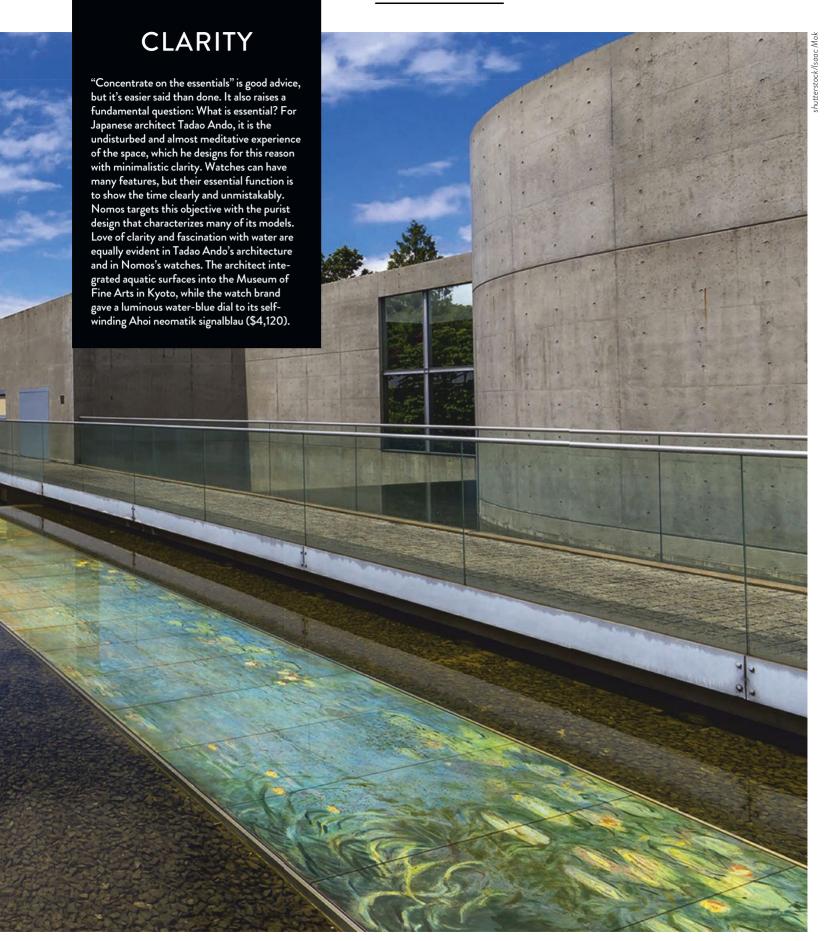






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#### PIONEERS OF STYLE





## BLACK ON WHITE

Computers and CAD software are useful, but most new watch designs begin with hand-drawn sketches. We reproduce five of them here.

by Alexander Krupp

#### THEME: **TECHNOLOGY**

Front, case, movement - each component in Blancpain's L-evolution C Tourbillon Carrousel contributes to this model's angular and emphatically high-tech look. The elements are arranged in multiple levels, with numerous facets, and the designers have made everything as transparent and as open as possible. This impression is further underscored by the movement's technology, which combines two challenging horological complications: a

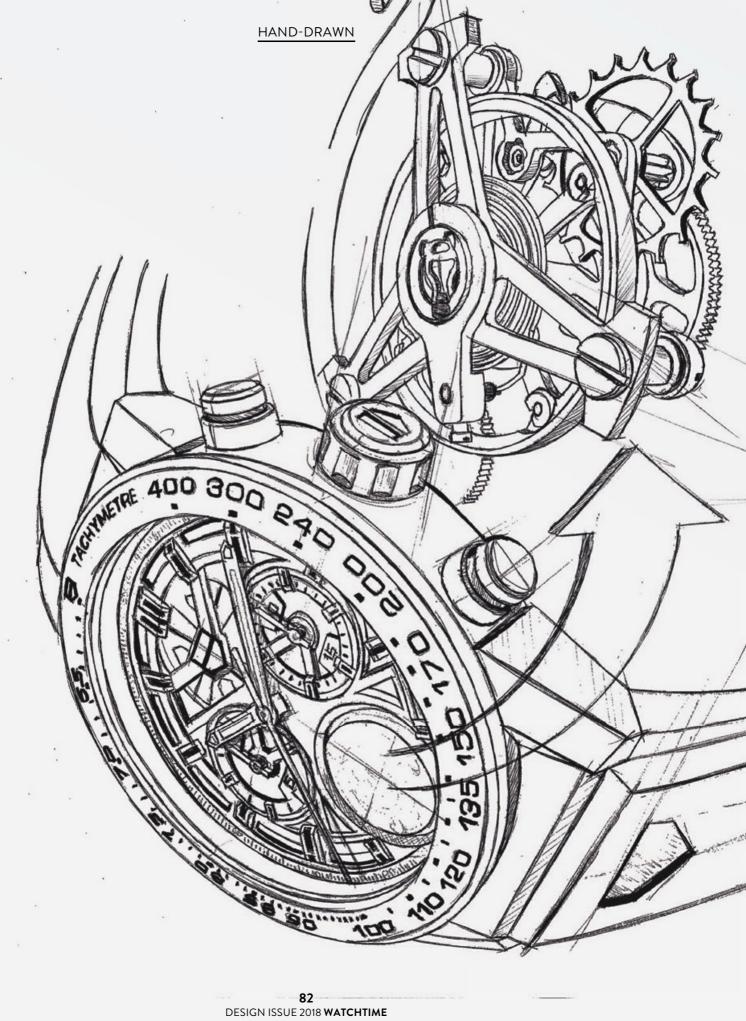


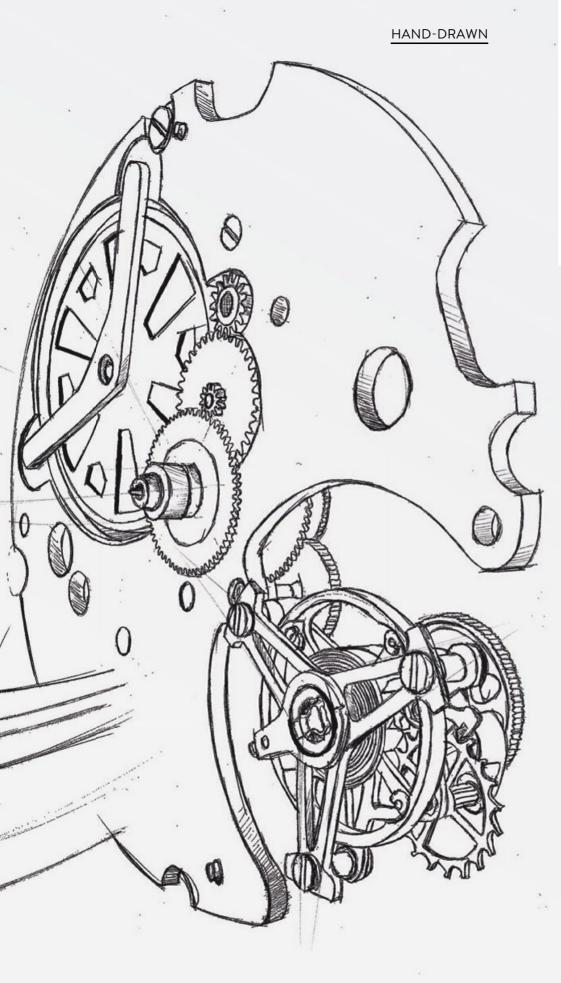








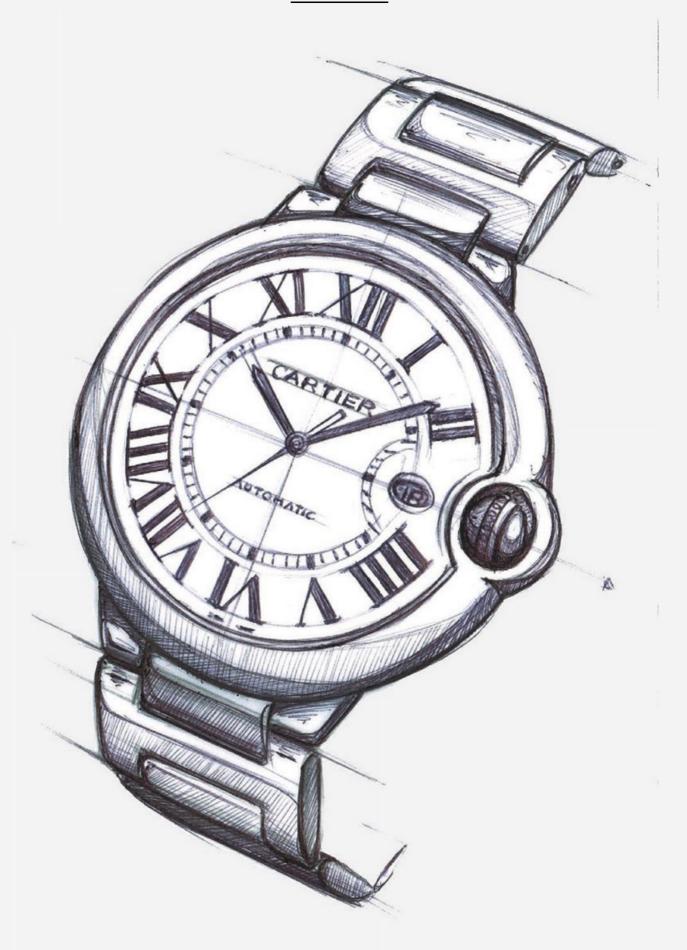




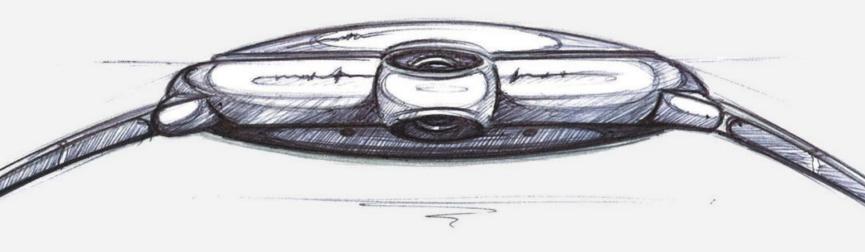
### CALIBER CAPER

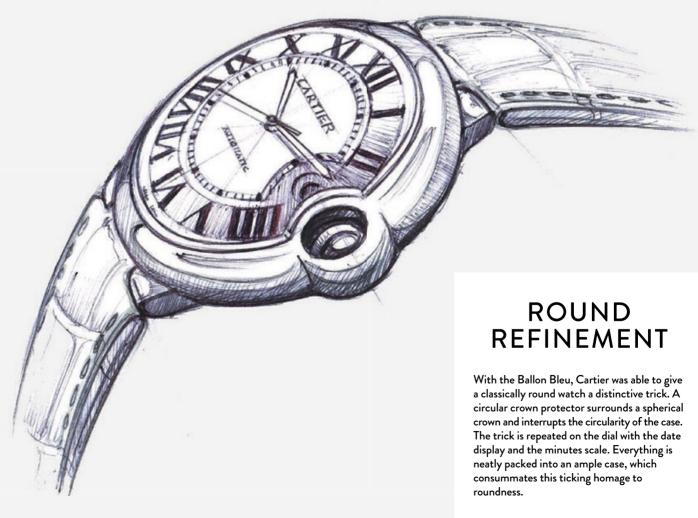
When a watch has no dial, the movement becomes the essential feature in the time-piece's design. TAG Heuer relies on this principle in its Carrera Calibre Heuer 02 Tourbillon COSC. Perfect symmetry is created by a subdial at the 3, another subdial at 9, a visible barrel at 12, and a tourbillon at 6.

#### HAND-DRAWN



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# Emotion Is the Clincher

Each of these three designers
pursues a different approach
to the theme of a watch, but all
agree that a watch is a highly
emotional object.

Questions by Maria-Bettina Eich





# **FIONA** KRÜGER

This young Scottish artist has earned recognition from the Swiss watch world – and earned it, oddly enough, with skull watches. Excellence in mechanics and craftsmanship distinguishes the watches that AN ARTIST WHO MAKES WATCHES Fiona Krüger makes under her name.

#### INSPIRED BY THE SKULL

Several sources of inspiration in my life history contributed to my fascination with the skull motif. I had studied visual art in Edinburgh before I came to design in Switzerland. I knew nothing about watches at the time. My interest began in the context of my master class in Lausanne. We visited Audemars Piguet's ateliers and the Patek Philippe Museum, where I fell in love with timepieces, especially the ones in the historical collection. I realized that a timepiece needn't be round and flat, but could be given almost any shape. I discovered that the skull motif had played an important role in the history of watchmaking. Skulls and skeletons were frequently used, especially in 16th-century ladies' pocketwatches, which were often shaped like three-dimensional skulls. For me, the skull was a universally recognizable symbol. There's also a very personal source: I spent three years in Mexico as a child and I vividly recall the skull symbolism of the Día de los Muertos.

#### A NEWCOMER TO THE SWISS WATCH **INDUSTRY**

I wasn't what the people in the watch world expected. I'm Scottish, not Swiss. I was a young woman, just 25 years old, and my project was very unconventional. The people in the Swiss watch industry wanted to be sure I was serious about my concept. They asked me very pointed questions and my answers convinced them that I knew what I was talking about. On the one hand, I think it helped that I was honest. Another decisive factor was that I was looking for partners, not suppliers: 50 to 70 percent of my designs are my own brainchildren; the rest are developed in dialogue with my partners. I see what my partners can do especially well and I specifically highlight that in my watches.

#### BETWEEN MECHANISMS AND AESTHETICS

A design makes no sense for me unless the mechanical part and the aesthetic aspect interplay. The Petit Skull is a good example: I searched for a small movement and when I found the skeletonized caliber at Soprod, I suddenly saw two eyes in it, which I integrated into my design. This watch wouldn't look so alive if it encased any other movement. It's like a marriage between the two aspects.

Of course, our watches are expensive, high-end and built with plenty of handcraftsmanship. But their greatest distinguishing feature is the artistic element, which owes its existence to my background. I think about a watch the way an artist thinks. That's the key to our brand identity. I believe we are a kind of hybrid. Although we offer all the details that watch collectors are looking for, we also appeal to buyers who are only marginally interested in watches but passionate about art and design.

#### **FUTURE PLANS**

Next year I plan to show the first piece in my brand's second collection that has nothing to do with skulls. I expect there'll be three to five product lines in the future and each will have a very strong concept all its own.





DESIGN ISSUE 2018 WATCHTIME

#### **DESIGNERS' VOICES**

#### **FASCINATED BY WATCHES**

As a man, it fascinates me that a wristwatch is one of the few things – in addition to one's clothing – that are somewhat special. I'm fascinated by the power that such a small object can develop on the wrist. I don't want to limit this to men, but the focus is stronger for us than for women, who have more possibilities. It's amazing to see how a terrific watch can alter a person's character or appearance. And for people who are enthusiastic about technology, it's crazy and wonderful to see how much virtuosity watchmakers can pack into a wristwatch. The whole topic has a lot of depth. I find it very stimulating.

stimulating.

THE STARTING POINT

clear direction to the products. It's about the world of "form follows function," i.e., clarity based on reasoning. My designs likewise tend in this direction.

# SIMON HUSSLEIN

Simon Husslein first focused his creative energies on watches when he was a young designer in Hannes Wettstein's studio.

Brands such as Nomos, Ventura and Braun have realized Husslein's designs. Now he works in his own atelier, where he develops concepts with the utmost analytical sophistication.

My designs always begin by considering who commissioned the project. That's a very rational approach. Ordinarily one begins with an existing brand that carries along with it an enormous backpack full of its history. It's absolutely essential that whatever I make as a designer corresponds to my client's notions or to the concept of the brand as a whole. Otherwise it's just hot air. The second fundamental component is the movement and the world that this movement brings with it because of its complications, its simplicity or its dimensions. From these factors, a profile can be derived of possible buyers and a potential environment. After I have this set up, I begin thinking about what types of watches might be conceivable. Are some ideas already in mind that I could use or do I need to invent something entirely new?

#### **EMOTION**

I'm very curious to see how my work reaches people emotionally. It means a lot to me when I see that someone derives pleasure from an object. There's a nice quote: "People don't remember what you told them, but they will never forget how you made them feel." In whatever area of design I'm working in, it always fascinates me to connect with people's capacity for emotional memory.

#### RECOGNIZABLE STYLE

I try to orient myself very strongly according to existing brand contexts, so I subordinate myself to them. One consequence is that my designs don't necessarily have a personal note. But I've also worked for brands that are fundamentally not dissimilar. They're companies with styles related to a history – to the Bauhaus and to a rationally based design vocabulary that shouldn't be boring, but that makes sense. It's not about decorating and embellishing, but about appreciating a genuinely sensible idea. This gives a

#### NEW CROWDFUNDING PROJECT

Pierre Nobs contacted me at the beginning of this year. We've known each other since 1999, when I began my traineeship in Hannes Wettstein's studio. Nobs had the idea of making something in the context of the new Swissmade regulations and via the décolletage method. This technique is really old hat, but it's new in watch manufacturing. It simply involves automated turning. We asked ourselves how we could use this technology to fabricate an affordable Swiss-made watch. The crowdfunding option seemed to be the most sensible kickstarter. We've been working on the Bólido ever since. We want to develop a watch that looks just as idiosyncratic as the method by which it's manufactured so we can capitalize on this manufacturing advantage.





# YVAN ARPA

Originally a mathematician, Yvan Arpa now heads one of Switzerland's most unconventional watch brands. But even if Arpa's designs for Artya often seem very spectacular, he views watches from a rather philosophical perspective.

#### FROM MATH TO WATCHES

Math is a wonderful universality because an exact answer exists for every precise question. This makes a person feel secure. But all this ceases to be the case when one enters the emotional world of watchmaking. Every design gives rise to emotional challenges. After working in the exact sciences, I felt a need to turn my attention to these emotional things.

#### **CAREER**

After I had earned my degree in math, I traveled across Papua New Guinea. That expedition gave me plenty of time to think things over. I came to the conclusion that I wanted to work for a Swiss product. I'm of Italo-Swiss extraction. Watches were an unconventional universe for me; I knew very little about them in the beginning. First I worked for Sector in the marketing department. Market analyses aren't very far from mathematics. Then I had the good fortune to come to Richemont, where I worked directly on the watch product. Later I worked for Hublot and Romain Jerome. Finally, I founded Artya.

#### ARTYA'S BRAND CONCEPT

Artya is a story of passion and love. We work for the long term. We don't simply make a product in order to sell it. We make it because it's important to us and it brings us joy. Our brand is 10 years old now and we were the first label to combine contemporary art and watchmaking. We currently have eight collections. They range from haute horlogerie to highly provocative pieces. Some of the latter, for example, contain real bullets. I'm proud to be able to say that one can no longer overlook Artya if one wants to buy a watch that's classical, provocative, rocking and conceptual.

#### THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Our guiding principle is very simple: "Let every-day things astonish you." The structures of contemporary life have led to a situation in which people are astonished less and less often. We try to preserve our capacity to be astonished – by everything. I'm happy when a competitor makes something exciting; I'm happy when I see a flower that blooms or wilts; I'm happy when I see fields of grain. All of these are stimuli for creation. They're acts of positivity. Not all things are rosy, but we try to behave as though they were!

From petite to militaristic, the Son of Earth Butterfly (left) and the Son of a Gun Russian Roulette (right), both by Artya

#### A WORLD OF MOTIFS

Some people feel that our motifs are dark and dreary, but I have a different attitude toward that. It's almost philosophical: A watch is associated with time, i.e. with the lifetime that remains for us here on Earth. That's very important for me. One must know one's time! That's also the theme, for example, in the Russian Roulette. It's important to benefit from the moment that one has – in the sense of "carpe diem." Everyone can understand this message. The gothic world of dragons and werewolves is also attractive. There's less competition; it's an exciting cosmos with interesting people.

#### DESIGN FOR OTHER BRANDS

I often work for other brands. The specifications are different every time. When one designs something, one almost becomes an actor. One imagines oneself inside someone else's skin and calls one's self into question. This was my situation when I designed the Smartwatch Gear S3 for Samsung. I made some suggestions and Samsung accepted them.

#### STORYTELLING

Storytelling occupies center stage for me. For the past 20 years, we've no longer needed watches to show us the time; a watch has a different task now. A brand like Rolex tells a grand story. The message is: "If I wear one of these, I've made it in life." But I was interested in other stories. I wanted to tell stories like the tales my Italian father told me when I was a little boy. We all yearn for stories with their emotions. We feel the need to escape from the world of numbers.





Do you like old things - or new things that look old?
The latter are in vogue among watch fans. Take a look at these retro firecrackers of 2017.

by Alexander Krupp



#### **ALL RETRO**

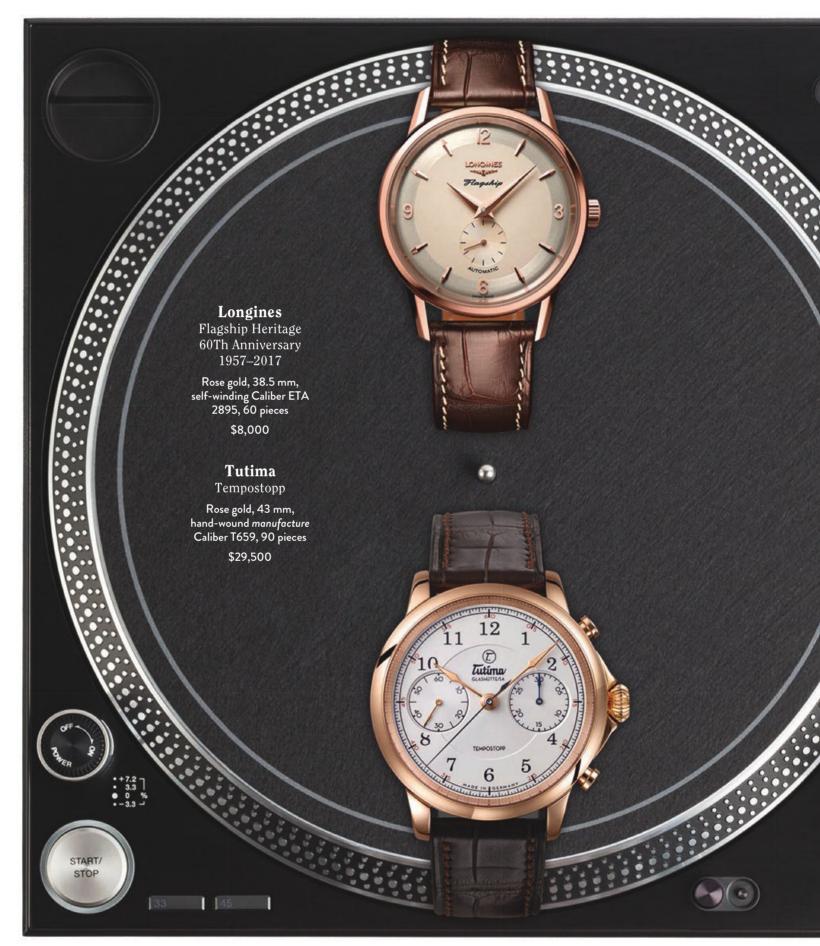
— **Have you rescued** your old phonograph from the cellar and plugged it in again? Or have you replaced the old record player that you threw away when you moved into your new apartment with a similar one that your friends were getting ready to toss into the trash? Perhaps you even found a hi-fi store and bought a new phonograph there, followed by a visit to a record shop that carries both old and newly pressed vinyl albums?

Why have you gone to so much trouble? After all, you've been listening to your music for years on your smartphone, iPad, iPod or laptop, which let you add new albums or set up new playlists whenever you like. Maybe you're not equipped with the absolute latest technology, but at least with the next-to-latest gadgets, and you continue to enjoy the CDs in the collection that you amassed during many years of scavenging. A CD player lets you jump from one song to another, repeat a favorite tune, or use the shuffle function to play the tracks in a random, ever-varied sequence. Why do you expend the extra effort of spindling a big vinyl LP, manually or automatically pivoting a delicate tone arm into position, listening to only five or six songs in their predefined and unalterable sequence, and then repeating the same procedure on the "B" side of the album? The reasons are as diverse as audio enthusiasts, but the following ideas probably play a role.











1.

You like the feel and the tangibility of a phonograph, where you can see something moving with your naked eye and where you operate the device with your own two hands.

#### 2.

Mechanical processes rather than purely electronic sequences run here, and this gives you the cozy feeling that the technology is somewhat understandable. Unlike the functioning of a disembodied MP3 player, here you can at least partially understand how a needle can make a sound come out of a groove.

#### 3.

You like the look of a record player: turntable, tone arm, round knobs, readily graspable slider to adjust the volume, Plexiglas cover and, last but not least, the sheer bulkiness of the device attract everyone's gaze. The apparatus is an object of daily use, a decorative item, and a piece of furniture all rolled into one.

#### 4.

Your phonograph and your collection of vinyl records are physical assets with genuine value. A new record player retails for several hundred dollars. And the rare vinyl albums on most collectors' shelves typically have a combined value many times greater than the cost of the phonograph itself. Unlike the data stored in an iPod, physical sound-storage media are a source of pride for their owners.

All of these musings likewise apply to mechanical watches. First, we enjoy touching and hearing them; we're soothed by their ticking; we like winding their mainsprings and setting their hands. Second, we basically understand the mechanical processes, i.e., how a tightened spring can power a gear train and how an oscillating balance can serve as a pacemaker. Third, a high-quality watch is a sight for sore eyes because its fine craftsmanship transforms a utilitarian object into a stylish accessory. Fourth, a mechanical watch embodies genuine value, a feat that is neither accomplished nor intended to be achieved by a time display integrated into a smartphone as one function among hundreds of others.





#### Panerai

Radiomir 3 Days Acciaio

Stainless steel, 47 mm, hand-wound *manufacture* Caliber P.3000

\$9,800

#### Zenith

Pilot Type 20 Chronograph Extra Special

Bronze, 45 mm, self-winding manufacture Caliber El Primero 4069

\$7,100

#### Omega

Speedmaster 60Th Anniversary

Stainless steel, 38.6 mm, hand-wound Omega Caliber 1861, 3,557 pieces

\$7,250

#### Stowa

Pilot's Watch Without Logo

Stainless steel, 36 mm, self-winding Caliber ETA 2824, 90 pieces

1,120 euros





# Spell it Out

Marco Biegert and Andreas
Funk began their collaborative
career as schoolboys in
Germany. Now their Qlocktwo
is sold at the Museum of
Modern Art's Design Store in
New York. Just about everyone
loves this timepiece, which
spells out the time in words.

by Maria-Bettina Eich



#### QLOCKTWO



#### **QLOCKTWO**

— When Marco Biegert and Andreas Funk hung a prototype of the Qlocktwo on the wall of their ad agency, they thought their new clock would simply be another of their collaborative tinkerings. As schoolboys, they had enjoyed puttering and experimenting with new things, like technical innovations, such as drones and projectors, software programs, and artistic projects. "We had something in common: We wanted to transform our ideas into tangible realities," Biegert says.

As the years passed, Biegert and Funk put school behind them and ran an advertising agency in their hometown of Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany. And they continued to tinker in their free time. One of the questions they asked was, "Why isn't there a clock that shows the time exactly the way people say it in words?" And they began working on a tangible answer to this question. That was the beginning of the Qlocktwo.

Progress was slow at first. "We had to develop it all from scratch," Funk recalls. The design, the technology with the clockwork and its underlying programming, the constellation of letters on the dial: Everything had to be conceived from proverbial Square One. Meanwhile, they also had an advertising agency to run. It was on one of the walls in this agency that they hung the world's first clock that spells out the time in written words.

Their ad agency's clients would stop and stare at the unique wall clock. Some of them wanted to buy it. Funk and Biegert began constructing a miniature series of 10 improved prototypes, which they displayed at the Blickfang design fair in Stuttgart in 2009. Biegert arrived a bit late on the fair's first day and was dismayed to see a crowd of people gathered around the stand that he shared with his partner. Had there been an accident, a technical defect, or maybe even a fire? No, it was none of the above. Instead, this was the beginning of an unanticipated success story. "On our way home," Funk remembers, "we began thinking for the first time about the possibility of someday becoming manufacturers of timepieces."

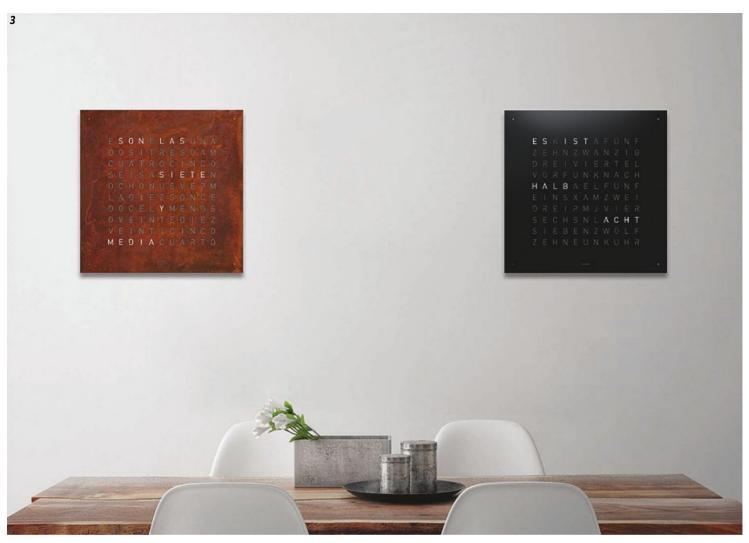
Biegert and Funk optimized their Qlocktwo and began its serial production. Thanks to its totally unconventional interpretation of the theme of showing the time, the Qlocktwo quickly and continually attracted new friends. Just about everybody who sees it for the first time suddenly stops in his tracks and stares at it. Unbelievable! The clock's illuminated letters can spell out, "It is half past one," or its German or French equivalent. The Qlocktwo is multilingual and even communicates in dialects.

The effect of this letter-filled square is remarkably surprising – and the time-telling artifact surely touches a nerve. Rather than inventing a merely whimsical designer object, Biegert and Funk created a timepiece that challenges our fundamental perceptual habits in a stimulating and congenial way. Although its display can be programmed to tersely spell out "Five to seven," most owners prefer to have their Qlock tell them the time in a complete sentence: "It is five to seven" – exactly as a polite business associate would phrase it. The statement changes every 5 minutes. Glowing dots in the four corners of the Qlocktwo's face indicate how many individual minutes have elapsed since the last 5-minute announcement. Biegert and Funk feel that this kind of time display also has a functional advantage because its user needn't translate a visual image into words.





#### QLOCKTWO



- Marco Biegert and Andreas Funk
- The largest Qlocktwo hangs at the main railroad station in Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany.
- The Qlocktwo can show the time in different languages.
- 4. The clock can "dress" in different colors.



The Qlocktwo is available in four variations. The best-known model is probably the 45-centimeter square (about 18 inches) "Qlocktwo classic" wall clock. Its big sister is the 90-centimeter square (about 36 inches) "Qlocktwo large." The "Qlocktwo touch" measures 13.5 centimeters (about 6 inches) square and is a combination table clock and alarm clock. The clock's user simply touches it to switch off the alarm or to switch on the built-in light. Finally, there's the "Qlocktwo w" wristwatch with a 35-mm square case.

The basic principle is always the same. The Qlocktwo's body is equipped with over 110 luminous fields, which correspond to the grid of 110 letters on its front cover. Magnets hold the front cover in place on all models except the wristwatch. This makes it quick and easy to change the cover, so a single Qlocktwo clock can "dress" in different colors and "speak" different languages. As one might expect, Biegert and Funk offer their clock with covers in languages other than German, such as English and French. And the full linguistic spectrum is much broader: It includes a variety of languages with Latin alphabets, such as Norwegian and Rumanian, as well as languages written in other alphabets, such as Greek, Russian, Arabic and Hebrew. The duo also makes a Japanese version and two Chinese variations. The Swabian-speaking model pays tribute to its inventors' homeland. Each language is separately pro-





grammed and can be set either on the clock per se or via an app. Funk assures us that this procedure is very simple and user-friendly.

Unlike the polyglot clocks, each "Qlocktwo w" wristwatch speaks only one language. Buyers can choose German, English, French, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, Arabic or Russian. The LEDs under the dial illuminate the time at the push of a button. The luminous dots for the intervening minutes are positioned below the grid of letters on the face of the 35-mm Qlocktwo w. On the larger variation, the Qlocktwo w 39, as well as on the wall clocks, the individual minutes dots occupy the four corners of its square face.

**Design aficionados appreciate** the surprising functionality of the Qlocktwo. They also like the clear quadratic shape with monochrome surfaces and frills-free typography. Biegert explains: "We're fans of lucid design. We love reduction. With each element, we ask, 'Is this really necessary?' " The successful result of this principle is that the Qlocktwo is perceived both as a clock and as a stylish interior furnishing. Biegert and Funk's brand accordingly occupies the middle ground between the world of timepieces and the world of interior design. Almost 50 percent of their timepieces are sold by jewelers and 50 percent by furniture stores. This wasn't always the situation. The Qlocktwo was seen primarily as a design object before Biegert and Funk participated in Baselworld for the first time in 2012. After their presence at the trade fair, the Qlocktwo's spark leapt the gap and also kindled enthusiasm in the watch industry. Biegert and Funk are confident that these two product worlds will increasingly interpenetrate each other, as one can already see in the trend for concept stores.

The Qlocktwo soon began to enjoy international success. Awards and commendations followed – "We won an international design prize each year" – and the Qlocktwo was accepted into the assortment of products available in the Design Store at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, an honor in the

DREIPM SECHSN SIEBEN

1. The 35-mm
"Qlocktwo w"
wristwatch

2. The Qlocktwo's illuminated letters spell out the time.

3. A single clock can "speak" different languages.

design world equivalent to being elevated to the rank of knight. "Sometimes we can hardly believe it," Biegert admits.

When one talks with the duo that invented the Qlocktwo, one certainly doesn't get the impression that they're in any danger of losing contact with the solid ground beneath their feet. Just the opposite. Despite the worldwide fascination with their product, each inventor continues to stand steadily, with both feet firmly rooted in the soil of their shared homeland. There's no outsourcing to low-wage countries. Instead, Biegert and Funk work with suppliers from their local region and with their staff of approximately 40 employees. "Quality is the most important aspect for us," Biegert explains.

Incidentally, the most spectacular "letter clock" hangs in Biegert and Funk's hometown at the main railroad station. Travelers can look up and read the time from a two-ton Qlock-two with a square face measuring a bit more than five meters along each of its four sides.

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